







Class PZ3

Book C2117

Copyright N<sup>o</sup>

**COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.**

















With Mother Love -  
Grandma Carmichael

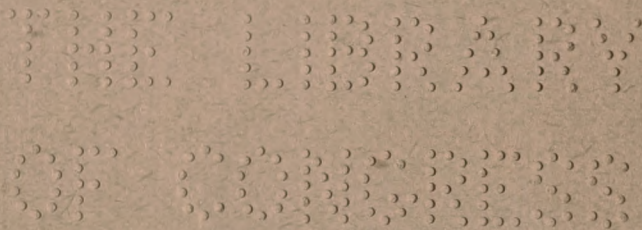
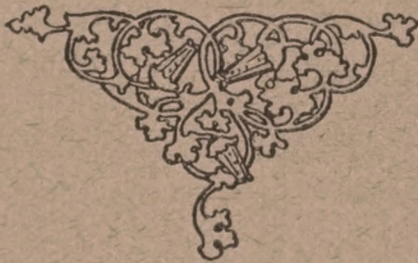


# BEWARE!

OR

# IRMA'S LIFE

By IDA CARMICHAEL



PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR  
HOUSTON, TEXAS



PZ3  
C2117

THE LIBRARY OF  
CONGRESS,  
TWO COPIES RECEIVED  
OCT. 2 1901  
COPYRIGHT ENTRY  
*Sep. 28, 1901*  
CLASS *a* XXc. No.  
*17932*  
COPY B.

---

COPYRIGHTED, 1901  
By IDA CARMICHAEL

---

YHARREI SHY  
22990000 70



To "Bess Allen," my inspiration;  
To Sister Jennie, my helper;  
To the girls of the fold;  
And to the memory of my  
Little Maggie, these lines are  
Lovingly dedicated by

THE AUTHOR







## INTRODUCTION.

THE social instinct — that feeling which causes a man to leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife — is divine. In the garden of Eden it was planted in the bosom of man while sin was yet unknown. It is the basis of the home, and the home is the bulwark of society. It is one of God's best gifts to man, and properly used brings to him purest joy and happiness; but, abused, it plunges him into the deepest sorrow and darkest degradation. Hence the exhortation of the Scriptures, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." But this is the last thing that young people of the present age think of doing. To restrain and guide their affections with judgment and reason; to regard the affections of another as too sacred to be trifled with; to be sensible and faithful and true in the use of this good gift of God, are lessons seldom learned, and seldom taught, in these last days. As the result, the shores of time are strewn with wrecks of unhappy homes and wasted lives.

To send a gleam of light across the waves as a warning to inexperienced mariners against sunken rocks and hidden shoals, this little book has been written. Its author is a woman of wide experience and wonderful faith. She has seen what she portrays, and has written from a full heart, often upon her knees in the midst of household cares. Most of the chapters have been read to the young people who live near her home, and



who thronged her parlor night after night, and were profoundly impressed for good by what they heard.

May the story in its printed form produce a similar effect wherever it may be read, and thus in the providence of God be a means of saving some from the dangers it reveals.

C. C. LEWIS.

*Keene Academy, Feb. 10, 1901.*



## NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

ONE morning in November, 1898, I awoke with the word "*Beware!*" singing around my pillow like a living voice. I asked, What does it mean? I was told to write. I had not written for publication since becoming a commandment-keeper. It seemed to me the ground was *too sacred* for my unworthy feet to tread upon. But I could not drown the voice which, like a sad refrain, sang the word "Beware" in my ears; and having *such* a burden for our youth, I took my pen and wrote. "*Beware!*" — finished in June, 1899,—is the result.

While it appeals directly to the Sabbath-keeping girl, I wish to say it is as lovingly offered to *any other* mother's daughter as to our own dear ones. It is for *any* God-fearing mother of whatever creed or name she may be. And it is for that mother's *son*, as well as daughter. It is a heart cry from a mother who has stood by the silent, white-robed form of her first-born, and whose mother heart yearns over the young everywhere. It is from a wife who knows whereof she writes, and one who knows that "earth hath no sorrow that Heaven can not heal."

---

WHILE this simple little work was being set in type, our Heavenly Father called upon me to suffer, and almost die; and when I was wandering in the valley of



the shadow of death, I cried out, with what those present thought to be my dying breath, "Tell my girls to *beware!* 'be ye not unequally yoked.'" I think I can safely say I was as near death as anyone ever was, and not fall asleep. My medical attendants will indorse this statement, as can also many of my friends. I felt the "swish" of the cold waters about my feet, and the shiver of death creep over my feeble frame. I knew when my kind physician clasped my hand, and left my bedside, never expecting from a human standpoint, to see my living face again. I knew when my family and dearest friends began what they thought to be a deathbed vigil; and yet the little book, "*Beware,*" did not leave my mind scarcely a moment. I saw some of our dear girls who live to bow at the shrine of the goddess of fashion, just swiftly "consumed away" as beautiful butterflies, all dressed in such gaudy material as I have seen those same girls wear.

While lying in a seemingly dying condition, God called upon me to pass through an experience which seemed sufficient to undo the strongest woman living; and although my heart had almost entirely failed to do its duty, and death was expected at any moment, I went through the sad trial which the dear Lord deemed good for me at that time, and came out with my feet upon a rock, and a new song in my mouth, and my goings established, all the better prepared to cry out, "Be ye not unequally yoked."



Girls, please heed the warning so humbly, so lovingly, yet so tragically given. Sometime it may do for you to know all the experience of this seemingly death chamber, but the time is not yet. One who fondly loves our youth, both boys and girls, lying here seemingly a physical wreck, prays for you all.

With mother love,

IDA CARMICHAEL.







## CHAPTER I.

It was just dusk. In a cheerful little bedchamber, in which everything was comfortable, complete, nay, one might say quietly elegant, a bright sea-coal fire burned in a dainty grate. This little room is worthy of another glance, for it represents "health reform" in furnishing. While no heavy hangings or thick carpets are present to hold "germs" and gather dust, the dainty, easily laundered, though bright and cheery hangings, handsome rugs, etc., give an air of refinement not always met with in heavier furnishings, and demonstrate the fact that bed-chambers may be furnished with an eye single to the *healthful* and the useful, as well as to the beautiful, a fact seemingly lost sight of by some health reformers.

A daintily shaded lamp gave out a roseate glow, and this, added to the blue blaze emitted by the sea coal in the grate, made a lovely picture of warmth and comfort inviting indeed.

The door swung quickly on its hinges, and a young girl stepped excitedly into the room. One glance served to show that for the moment, at least, the beauty there was lost upon her. She at once approached the dresser, and looked long and earnestly at her own sweet, young face reflected there. This is what she saw: A clear, healthy complexion; bright, soulful brown eyes, and good teeth; all crowned by a wealth of well-kept, crinkly brown hair — there you have my little pet, Irma Dean.

With a quickly drawn breath she exclaimed, "Oh, to



think that he is really coming to call this evening, and that mama and papa have consented to my receiving him! How is it that he ever fancied little me, I wonder? But just to think, my pleasure is spoiled because mama does not approve, as he is not a Sabbath-keeper. How I do wish he was."

A moment she seemed to hesitate.

"Oh, I wish Aunt Prudence had not said so much about Dinah's going 'out to see the daughters of the land.' Because Jacob's daughter came to grief is no reason why I should. All just because a young man who is not a Sabbath-keeper should come to call upon me. Aunt Prudence is good and wise, I know, but she gives me the heartache. But mama says she is as true as she is prudent; and that is saying a good deal, for she is prudent by nature as well as by name. I know mama had rather I should not receive this visit, but — oh, well, what am I to do?"

The woman who hesitates is lost, so, as we foresaw from the first, desire had its way, and Irma began slowly to prepare herself to receive her visitor.

She was about nineteen years of age. She had not finished her course in school, though far, far beyond her mates; for this dainty maiden of mine was exceedingly bright, though quite practical withal, and her frail mother's stay and comfort.

Irma laid out a lovely dress to wear, and then she once more approached her mirror.

"Why does mama think bangs, corsets, pointed toes, 'Dewey frills' to one's dress skirts, and all those things so bad! I know we are to be a 'peculiar people,' and I



think we are *indeed*. How will I look in *his* eyes with hair drawn straight back (as mama insists upon), this plain skirt hung to a 'freedom' waist, broad-toed shoes, and with simply a ribbon for my waist, instead of one of those fancy belts so much worn?"

As I have said, the dress was lovely. The material was soft and fine, the color just suited to the bright young face, and was made after the latest model of "health" gowns. It was so draped that the sweet young form untrammelled and unconfined, looked winsome indeed. But she was about to take a doubtful step, and that alone was sufficient to cloud her spiritual eyes to the beautiful. Had she been dressing for church or Sabbath school and worn this really beautiful gown for the first time she would have been delighted with the effect, and would have flown to kiss mama and thank her for the gift. But as it was, she wore the dress under protest.

Girls, I leave you think over this, while we take a look into the room of Irma's mother.



## CHAPTER II.

MRS. DEAN sat thoughtfully by her fire. Everything in this room bespoke the same quiet elegance, and gave evidence of wealth, just as in the daughter's simpler apartment. As before indicated, Mrs. Dean was rather frail. Having learned the "truth" late in life, she had the effect of many errors to undo, many things to lay aside and outlive, that had left an almost insurmountable evil in their train. But she was faithful and earnest, given to prayer, and had been rigid as to dress and diet from the very first. So her daughter, her only child, had cause to be thankful, for she was naturally more frail than her mother; but that dear mother's watchfulness and faithfulness had helped the daughter into a bright, cheery, healthy young womanhood.

Mrs. Dean was now confronting a problem hard to solve. For the first time in life, she either had to grievously disappoint her sweet young daughter, or forego her usual rigid rule of having that daughter obey her in everything; and to disappoint her child in this particular thing would be to force obedience in the letter, but not in the spirit, which the mother was wise enough to know. But, the mother had something to regret, as the following conversation with her husband will show.

Mr. Dean had just entered the room. He bore the same evidence of refinement and culture that we have found in the other members of the family. He approached his wife, and said, gently, "Why so sad?"



She answered, "I am not yet satisfied, not yet reconciled to the thought of Ralph Hughs calling upon Irma. You see, we are beginning to reap what we have sown. I was always opposed to her attending those entertainments given at the homes of those brothers and sisters who did not live up to the light in regard to health reform. I know all have considered me a fanatic upon this point, but everything holy bears me out in my seemingly extreme position. There is no true religion without *absolute* obedience in regard to dress, diet, etc.; and while I have been firm in my own home, I now regret that through your persuasion Irma has ever been permitted to go to those places where ice cream and rich cake are wont to be served at unseemly hours of the evening. I tell you it will not do. It is 'lusting after the flesh-pots of Egypt,' and gratifying the lust, too. Everything goes to prove that it is those that indulge in these things who are giving up the faith. Not one who lives strictly in accordance with *true* health reform will ever leave the Adventist ranks.

"But to return to Irma. We can see that she is delighted at the idea of Ralph Hughs calling here; and it was at the ice cream party given at Sister B——'s last summer, when they invited so many unconverted young people, that she first met him. You know she has not finished her course in school, and she is too young to receive gentlemen callers anyway."

"Now, mother, you are, as usual, 'making a mountain out of a mole-hill.' Irma is grown — a steady, practical girl, well raised, hedged in by all *your* pure ideas of propriety, etc.; and do not let us put on the 'holier than



thou ' aspect, and draw ourselves like turtles into our own houses and stay there. Why not permit Irma to receive the friendly call of this desirable young man? It is true, he is not a Sabbath-keeper ; but he may become one under the influences to be met with in a true Christian home such as we know ours to be. I really think you and Aunt Prudence took notice of but one portion of the book of Genesis in the late Sabbath-school lessons, and that was the downfall of Dinah through her visiting the daughters of the land. Do not be one-sided. Be an all-around Christian."

"Well, my dear, I do try to be. Now, upon you, as the head of the household, rests this grave responsibility. Remember, you should be a second Abraham, commanding your household and your children after you. I shall make earnest prayer over this. Now we will adjourn to the library, and there await Irma's caller."



### CHAPTER III.

WE left Irma just ready to descend to await her caller. She lingered still a moment at her glass, not from vanity, though the picture was fair to look upon, but to again commune with herself.

“ Now I do hope I will please mama in one thing, at least. I shall have Mr. Hughs shown into the library at once, which is considered here the family sitting room, and I shall try to entertain him in the prescribed way. I do not see why we could not go into the parlor, and spend the time with music, pictures, and bric-à-brac, and yet all be in ‘ good form ’, but mama thinks otherwise, and it shall be as she wishes.”

Having settled this point, with one critical look at her reflected form, she stepped lightly from her room, and ran downstairs. She was not at all surprised to find her parents present, and found that she was rather glad of it; for she felt timid as the time approached for her to be put to the test, and to receive and entertain this particular caller.

At the time when fashionable evening calls are made, Mr. Hughs was shown into the library by the servant.

A glance reveals that he is a man of the world. Tall, well-formed, elegantly dressed, polished, even beyond the degree usually met with in men of this class. To his credit be it said, while he might indulge in social follies, he held in contempt the vices which step so closely upon folly's heels. His gray-blue eye, a Napoleon's eye, bespoke an indomitable will.



As he advanced to greet first Irma's parents, with whom he was slightly acquainted, then herself, one could see that his eyes brightened with more than a friendly interest as they fell upon the winning picture that the young girl made. Her cheeks were slightly flushed, and the little excitement visible in one usually so quiet and dignified for one of her years, only rendered her more attractive.

Seeing at once that he was expected to spend his time with Irma and her parents, he quietly fell into line. He had sufficient perception to read between the words, so to speak, and soon discovered that while Mrs. Dean did not favor his call, Mr. Dean did; and he at once began to make himself agreeable to Mr. Dean, even more than to Irma herself.

Irma soon forgot her shyness, as the conversation turned upon foreign travel; this deeply interested her; for to be a foreign missionary had been the dream of her life. Mr. Hughs had traveled abroad quite extensively, and as he knew how to make others see what he had seen, without being in the least self-conscious or vain of his great conversational powers, or at all conceited of his knowledge of other countries and people, even Mrs. Dean became deeply interested, and Irma was delighted. Thoroughly a man of "good form," he did not seem to be the entertainer, but the entertained; and being one to put others at their ease, and draw out their best conversational powers, he, by frequent turning to Mr. Dean, and deference to Mrs. Dean's seldom-advanced ideas, with a frank manner of youthful equality toward Irma, soon was giving and receiving real pleasure in this quiet family.



Mrs. Dean had once been a social queen, but it was when Irma was a babe ; so the latter knew nothing of one phase of society with which her mother was very familiar. Mrs. Dean was so much pleased with her young guest's conversational ability, his polish, and his culture in general, that the evening was advanced when with a start she glanced at the clock over the mantle, and found it was time for family worship. This was something never omitted or postponed in this home.

Irma caught her mother's meaning glance, and her father's quiet command. She arose, and proceeded to turn up the lights, open the organ, get the Bibles, and hand them to her parents ; then she paused a moment, with her own beautiful Bible in her hand, hesitating before offering it to her guest. Mrs. Dean made the seemingly necessary explanation.

"I suppose, Mr. Hughs, that you know we are followers of the meek and lowly Jesus," she said, "and as we are told to 'seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and his righteousness,' we permit no social duty to interfere with family worship at the usual hour. I hope, however, that you can enjoy this service with us, especially if you sing. Irma plays for us, and as she will now take her place at the organ, I hope you will join us in singing praises to the Lord."

To say that Ralph Hughs was taken by surprise is to express the situation in mild language. However, he soon recovered himself, and almost before one could have noticed the slight degree of hesitancy in his manner, he was at Irma's side, offering assistance. Never in his life had he been present at family worship, but he conducted



himself so decorously that one would have found it hard to believe this was his first privilege of the kind.

The first song selected was from those usually chosen by Adventist families upon such occasions. Mr. Dean at once saw that the young man knew no more of such songs than he knew of "the doctrine," so in making his next selection, he said:—

"Irma, let us sing 'What a friend we have in Jesus.' I think we all can sing that."

In one moment Ralph's mind flew back to his childhood days, and hovered around the one object of childish worship, a little sister just younger than himself. She had been very devout in her nature, loved her Bible and Sunday-school lessons, and sang this song almost continually, especially when sick or sad. She had been dead since his tenth year. But while the other members of his father's worldly family had seemingly long since ceased to grieve for the frail little creature, there had always been a sense of loss in his life.

He had a splendid voice, but never, since singing with his little sister in childish days, had it been used to praise the Lord. He was, however, much sought after by those giving private theatricals, concerts, and musical entertainments of every kind. Now carried back by the strains of the old familiar hymn, he threw his whole soul into his voice, and sang as he did not know he could sing. It was a novel experience for Ralph Hughs, the society man; but he enjoyed it.

Mr. Dean selected a suitable portion of Scripture, and now Irma ventured to hold out her Bible to Ralph, which he quietly took. As she had thoughtfully opened the



book at the chapter to be read, he was saved the embarrassment of searching for it, as would otherwise have been the case. When his turn came, he read in a rich, full voice the few lines of Scripture so new to him. When the family knelt for prayer, he was subdued indeed, and when Irma in a clear, sweet voice, uttered her evening petitions to her Heavenly Father, he was almost awe-struck. It was something beyond his comprehension, — this young girl to be so fearless in her worship of the true and living God.

As it was now past ten o'clock, Ralph took his leave, after thanking Mrs. Dean in a very earnest manner for the evening, and thereby receiving a cordial invitation from Mr. Dean to call again.



## CHAPTER IV.

WE will now look in upon Ralph as he is taking his breakfast the morning after his call upon the Deans.

It was an elegant breakfast room, the furnishings and fixtures being of the best. The food was such as one would expect to see upon the table of a down-town banker, served in quiet elegance by an experienced waiter, who discreetly withdrew as the last plate of buckwheat cakes, with the accompaniment of maple syrup, was placed upon the table.

Ralph merely toyed with his egg and toast, and stopped to drop an extra lump of sugar into his cup. He at last broke the silence by turning to Mrs. Hughs suddenly, saying:—

“Mother, do you know a family by the name of Dean, who lives on the opposite side of town? The family consists of father, mother, and one child, a daughter nearly grown.”

Mrs. Hughs replied: “Yes, I think I know the family you refer to, or I once knew them. I do not now.”

“Was Mrs. Dean in society?” asked Ralph.

“Yes, a social queen much sought after, and a general favorite, for she was quite wealthy and very talented; but that was when she was a girl, and in the first few years of her married life.”

Mrs. Hughs here paused, and looked at her son, who flushed slightly, but in a light manner continued the con-



versation by asking, "What caused her to give up her gay life?"

"She was suddenly converted to some fanatical religious views, held by a sect of people called Seventh-day Adventists, their most prominent characteristics being the observance of the old Jewish Sabbath, and the preaching of the doctrine of the soon coming of Christ. When Mr. and Mrs. Dean accepted these views, and began to keep Saturday for Sunday, they were soon ostracised by their fashionable friends, and were also cast off by her parents, who were very proud. The Adventists were not held in very high esteem twenty years ago. Nor are they any more desirable in my eyes now than they were then, although they have grown wonderfully, and have some fine institutions of learning, of health, and other branches of their work. I think they have a place of worship in the city; at least, quite a number of them reside over in the part of town where Mr. Dean is situated. How in the world did you come to know this Adventist family?"

Ralph blushed deeply this time, and hesitated slightly before replying. He at last said:—

"Through a mutual friend, a young man who went to the State Normal a while. He is a bright fellow, but he left school because it was so hard for him to do his school work in four days, that he might keep sacred the seventh day; for this particular Normal teaches on Saturday, and observes Monday as a weekly holiday."

The entrance of a servant here put an end to the conversation. Ralph longed to ask his mother more about the Deans, but her questioning eyes and manner caused him to bide his time, and try to gain elsewhere the coveted information.



Mrs. Hughs was a very handsome, stylish woman, a worshiper at the shrine of the goddess of fashion, as were her two daughters, Lela and Ada, although Lela cared less for the opinion of the "four hundred" than did her mother and Ada, and would often step out of the beaten path to do some little deed of kindness, or bestow some favor upon the needy; and had she been encouraged, she would have followed in the footsteps of the little Maggie of whom Ralph had been so fond. This child was a wonder, to have been born and reared for nine years in such a godless home. It was well that she slept when she did, for she was never understood by any member of her family, and was only loved and appreciated by her brother Ralph.

As has been said, Lela was somewhat like her, but in the soil in which she grew, there was nothing to nurture that side of her nature, so it was dwarfed; but the disposition to love and to help would crop out occasionally. She and Ralph were nearer together than any other members of this worldly family.

O, vain mother! what will your reaping be? You could have molded these strong young natures into the image of the Saviour, had you known him yourself. But your highest ambition was to see them enter society, there to be sought after, flattered, and toasted by the godless and the giddy; to see these really grand-looking girls spend hours acquiring the step of the latest dance, or in the parlors of a "French Modiste," that they might out-dance and outdress their equally godless associates in society.



## CHAPTER V.

SOME weeks passed before Ralph Hughs called again upon the Deans. When he did so, he received a welcome from all, including Mrs. Dean.

Irma saw the trend of this friendship, and strove against it, for her mother did not approve of it, although her father did. She studied hard, and did all she could to quiet her conscience, but the small still voice would not be drowned. "Beware! Beware! Beware!" seemed to ring in her ears continually. She heard the refrain in the song of the birds, in the strains of her music, in the ripple of the water, everywhere.

I, too, say, Beware, my young readers; think before you once take the step to put yourself in her position. You know that no blessing rests upon those who turn aside and go without the fold to form their *close* friendships. Let me beg of you not to encourage anything of the kind, be the man ever so winning and agreeable, ever so polite and polished, ever so cultivated and traveled. Oh, remember "a house divided against itself can not stand," and remember that no true Sabbath-keeping girl can afford to trifle upon this point; and if she receives the serious attention of any young man, it is sinful, if she is not intending to accept more from him, even his name, and become his wife. Oh, beware! I have seen young men devotedly attentive to Sabbath-keeping girls,—young men who knew not God, who had no reverence for things sacred, who would have smiled with contempt at



the mere mention of the seventh-day Sabbath elsewhere than in the presence of those girls. I have seen those same girls dress in a manner to please the unconverted, and even receive their calls upon the Sabbath; have seen their eyes grow bright in anticipation of the coming of those same ungodly acquaintances. O, girls, pause! think upon these things. Do you realize where you are drifting? The pride of life, and the pride of the eye, is not of God; it is of Satan. Whom do you serve, whom do you wish to please, God or man?

Time passed rapidly with Irma, and the commencement exercises drew on. She was much excited, and studied fitfully, for she gave long hours to dreaming of a possible future, which she should have given to her books, and thereby she was forced to study in an irregular manner, that produced a weariness and peevishness not pleasing to her Heavenly Father, nor pleasant in her home; for she had been the brightest ornament there, and the sweetest comfort. But the terrible war which the two powers were now waging in her young heart, unfitted her for everyday duties, and soon made her less cheerful and less helpful.

This pained, beyond expression, her gentle, fragile mother. But oh, the agony of remorse in that mother's heart! How she wept before the Lord, and besought him to help Irma to throw off the influence which was being brought to bear upon that young life. Mr. Dean seemed utterly blind to the fact that there could possibly be any evil result from a seemingly simple friendship between his daughter and this, from a worldly standpoint, desirable young man. This may seem strange, but Satan



has blinded the eyes of even wiser men than Mr. Dean, and will continue to do so, unless they seek the Lord with all their hearts. Mr. Dean thought it preposterous that anyone should for one moment entertain the idea that *his* daughter could love and marry anyone outside of the faith.

While Mr. Dean was blind to the true condition of affairs, Mrs. Dean was not. She saw that slowly but surely her sweet young daughter was yielding to the "siren song;" was each day growing less godly, and less careful of keeping *all* the commandments of God; for now Irma would sometimes say:—

"O mamma, those little things seem so unnecessary, why so Pharisaical?"

Mrs. Dean could scarcely believe the evidences of her own senses as these things were forced upon her; this all proves that while Irma seemed to be so intrenched that it looked impossible to undermine the citadel, time showed to the contrary. Of course, the Sabbath and such perceptible things as all outward forms of the truth were held inviolate. It was the inner life that had undergone this sad change.

Irma was to be graduated at the close of the college session, and had looked forward with intense interest to this hour; but only as a means to the end, intending to at once begin the Medical Missionary course, and so fit herself for her chosen life work; viz., that of a foreign missionary. But her watchful mother noticed with a sinking heart that Irma no longer spoke of taking the extra course, but instead seemed to experience a sense of relief to think that her school days were so nearly ended,



and rejoiced at the prospect of "being free," as she expressed it.

Mrs. Dean was filled with remorse; for she felt, nay, knew, that if she had lived in accordance with the light given her in former days, Irma would never have come in contact with Ralph Hughs in the manner which she did, if at all. So, sisters, be careful where your tender young charges are permitted to visit, and remember that Sister Blank, who has such nice entertainments with all worldly accompaniments, may be ever so pleasant, ever so kind and winning, and seemingly ever so devout upon the Sabbath, but if the worldly element is not eliminated from her home, it is safer that your daughter decline with thanks all invitations to visit in that home. "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Let us ponder well this scripture, and heed it most faithfully; for else, we will *not* do *all* to the glory of God, and there will be more mothers among us bowed down with inevitable, though unavailing grief, as was Irma's mother. Alas! the harm was done, and all her tears could not undo it.

Beware!



## CHAPTER VI.

AND what of Ralph? He was not happy, as the following conversation with his mother will serve to show. He had just entered the parlor, and seated himself by a window. He seemed to be vexed and disturbed at the beginning of the conversation, and was much more so at its close.

His mother began by saying, "Where do you keep yourself these days, my son? We see so little of you, and I have been hearing a floating rumor that pains me very much. One of your chums told Ada that he saw you on the street with a 'Puritan' maiden, who was 'sans bangs, frills, or powder,' as he expressed it. And he laughed at the way you 'turned the corner' to avoid meeting him. Now, Ralph, who was this girl? I am forced to the conclusion that it must have been the daughter of the Deans, the Adventist family you were questioning me about so closely not very long since. Is it possible, my son, that you are so forgetful of your position in society as to have a serious thought in that direction? Surely not. You know, that dearly as I love you, I could not tolerate such a thing."

Ralph breathed quickly, and his eyes flashed, ere he replied:—

"Well, I should really like to know to whom you are indebted for this choice bit of gossip. Madame Rumor had best let my name alone. I shall be seen upon the street with any young lady I may choose to walk with;



and as to this particular one, if Ada possessed the half of her charming qualities, I would have a sister to be proud of indeed. Now, mother, as you have brought about this conversation, I must say, once for all, that I like Irma Dean. She is superior to any girl I have ever met. Of course I object to her very peculiar religious views, just as much as you do or possibly can; yet their home life is beautiful, and it is these same 'peculiar religious views' that make it so. I have been thinking for some time that I would talk with you. Come, mother, can you not appreciate the situation? Overcome your prejudice, take my sisters, and call upon Mrs. Dean and her daughter. That would be the right thing to do, under the existing circumstances."

Ralph seemed relieved as he thus unburdened his heart to his mother. Cold and unbending as was his "lady mother," he now so craved sympathy and help that he ventured to throw himself upon his mother's mercy, and see if she could be touched.

Mrs. Hughs froze in a moment. Drawing her superb form to its full height, she replied:—

"I decline with thanks. Not I. If your matrimonial aspirations are no higher than this indicates, I beg leave to be excused from furthering such a social suicide. If this comes to your father's ears, he will in all probability stop your allowance; and should you persist, he will doubtless cut you off without the half—yes, without one dollar, save the amount inherited from your grandfather, which I allow is a little fortune of itself. But it would be far short of what your expectations have always been as the acknowledged heir of the Hughs'



name and business. However, the small amount which is yours in your own right, might prove sufficient for the modest wants of your Adventist maiden."

Ralph felt the angry blood dye brow and cheek, but the respect he bore his mother held angry words in check. He remarked: "Very well, so be it. I have appealed to you as a son to a mother; you have hardened your woman's heart against me and given the proverbial stone instead of a crumb of comfort."

After this he abruptly left the room. Mrs. Hughes sat angrily tapping her slipper upon the carpet. She was both surprised and annoyed. She had feared something of this kind, but the facts exceeded her fears.

O mother! you have missed the opportunity of your life. Your boy's heart was open then to all that was good. Had you been in touch with the blessed Saviour, you would have recognized the tenderness in his voice, and would have taken advantage of the occasion to have bound him to yourself with such cords of mother love that nothing could ever have severed them. But no; your worldly, ambitious nature can appreciate nothing that is not wrapped and labeled of "the four hundred." In other words, you can not love or appreciate the most lovable girl in the world, nor welcome her as your son's wife, unless she is of your own "set." But still less can you welcome this particular girl, because of her religious views. Be she ever so suitable otherwise, because she does not worship as yourself she is to be repudiated.

How many in polite society would disclaim the charge that their dislike to certain ones sprang from this same cause — in other words, *religious intolerance*.



## CHAPTER VII.

SUMMER in all her loveliness was upon the land. Those who truly loved the Lord rejoiced to again be permitted to wander forth upon the calm, soul-inspiring summer afternoons at close of social meeting to commune with nature, and view in nature, nature's God. Many who had been shut in, sad and discouraged, almost dismayed, during the trying winter months, now threw aside those gloomy feelings, and, with a new lease of life, spiritual and physical, went out to take lessons in perfect trust from the warblers in the grove and the lambs upon the hillsides. Matt. 10:29-31.

Oh, who can be so stoical as to remain unmoved while viewing God's works, animate and inanimate! And to those whose homes are barren, bleak, and unattractive during the long, hard winter months, how sweet it is to know that they can revel in the beauties of nature, with no stint of sunshine or warm balmy air! Who does not feel like exclaiming, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!" Old but ever new words of praise. Sweet, expressive, grand, and glorious. O, let us indeed "praise God from whom *all* blessings flow." Praise him for the scenes of beauty here on earth. Praise him for the grand panorama of heavenly beauties which faith enables us to view; yes, for the beauties of the New Jerusalem, our home in the earth made new, where no more chilling, blighting want shall be felt; where heart-aches and bereavements will be unknown, for "there



will be no parting there." How comforting! We can bear all our "light afflictions" here with much more fortitude and resignation, if we will only keep our eye of faith on our "home over there." Who has not loved and lost? Who has not grieved and wept? Who has not felt his heart leap for joy at the thought of that eternal summer which will soon burst upon our enraptured vision? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

As before stated, Irma was to be in the graduating class at this commencement. The ordeal was now upon her, and she was fearful that she was not so fully prepared for it as she might have been. But she prayed with her old-time fervency, and sought the Lord more closely than for months past; and her devoted mother kept her child's name continually before the throne of grace. O would that our youth could know of the agony of prayer that only a mother can feel; see the bitter, blinding tears that are shed; realize how utterly a mother gives her *all* to her child! A mother comes nearer being Christlike in this love than is anything else on earth, and will sacrifice life itself to further the interest of her child. So many of our young people seem to take it as a matter of course that "mother" should do all these things; that mother should bear the burdens, and weep and pray. To such dear mothers we can say, Do not be discouraged, for Jesus is your friend; and you will yet see of the travail of your soul and be satisfied. We have seen a mother prostrate with grief, pouring out the anguish of her soul to her God, while the children for whom she was pleading were perfectly indifferent. God help such suffering mothers.



Some people might live without our God, but a true mother, never. O Father, do help us mothers! It is so sad to us to see little feet that we have loved and fondled, and helped to take their first faltering steps, when larger grown, striving to enter forbidden paths; eager to pander to the thrill of the world's music; willingly going where Jesus does not lead; restless at the restraint placed upon them by a prayerful, judicious mother. Mothers, pray on. Fail not, nor falter. Jesus is your strength. The feeling that he exhibited for his own sweet mother should prove a solace to us. How he must love those who are mothers indeed!

A mother once said, "I have long been trying to decide what is the noblest thing that God ever made, and I have come to the conclusion that it is a *true* mother." It was a strong expression, but very near the truth.

While our Irma was very dutiful to her frail mother, the girl could not understand the apprehensions that Mrs. Dean now knew. Upon more than one occasion Ralph Hughs had walked home with Irma, and had several times entered the Adventist house of worship. He had seemed to be interested in the discourse, but his eye sought the Dean pew oftener than the pulpit. The mother knew that he was there simply because Irma was there. Irma looked conscious, too. Mr. Dean alone was of that opinion that Mr. Hughs was becoming interested in "the truth."

Father, can you not see that the interest is in your own sweet daughter, and that it is alone to win her smile of approval that this fashionable aristocrat comes to your house of worship?



## CHAPTER VIII.

It would be difficult to find a fairer picture than Irma Dean made as she arose to receive her diploma. Dressed in a gown of pure white, with her waist encircled by a broad, bright ribbon, her beautiful hair drawn back in a becoming manner, she was fair indeed; and so thought more than one, especially Ralph Hughs, who was early in his seat, and remained until the close of the exercises.

Irma succeeded beyond *her* most sanguine expectations, with both routine work and her essay, but her friends were disappointed; for it had for months been both the expectation and desire of her classmates that she should be valedictorian, and they could not understand why she was at the last eclipsed by one not nearly so gifted. Irma knew why. She knew it was because of moments spent in dreamy reveries instead of in hard study, of half hours spent in conversation that should have been given to her books.

Her mother had often wished of late that Irma had been in the Home, so that she would have been debarred the privilege of receiving young gentlemen callers. But knowing that the husband, the "priest" of the home, was really the one who should have regulated these things, she had meekly submitted, and had seen the friendship between her daughter and Ralph Hughs ripen into something more, at least so she feared. Irma was not really trying to keep anything hidden from her mother; the relationship existing between them as mother



and daughter was too perfect for anything of that kind. There are, however, things hard to grasp, much less to impart,—an unexplainable something that we may know and feel, that another also is conscious of, yet we can not speak of that “something;” we are held back by some influence, and much as we might wish to have a heart-to-heart talk with that same person, we just can not; and the nearer and dearer the tie existing between those concerned, the more difficult becomes the breaking through the reserve, and giving and receiving the confidence due in the matter. Right here, O mothers, is where so many daughters are lost. Just here is where some one else steps in, and gains the young heart’s confidence, which should be given to mother, and mother alone. If one, more than all others, needs to be as wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove, it is a mother.

Mothers, study well the words and ways of your young daughter. If you think she is withholding anything from you, do not importune or reproach, but be so loving and tender, so respectful, yet so solicitous; so truly a mother, yet so gentle and companionable; so full of interest, yet so unobtrusive; be so much more to her than anyone else can possibly be, that she will just spontaneously turn to you rather than to anyone else on earth. Do not think the time lost in which you drop your work to run into the parlor just to listen to the last piece of music for a few minutes. Do not frown, or remonstrate too much, when your daughter is seemingly careless or inattentive to your commands. Often it is not intentional. Do not let her see that you notice every little thing. But if you are wise, nothing will escape your notice, and



"straws show which way the wind blows." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." This reads just as truly if we say, If any mother lacketh wisdom, let her ask of God who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given her. For surely he giveth every mother who asketh, all wisdom necessary to discharge her sacred duty. How precious and inspiring the thought that God is to give us wisdom and strength for everything; for in giving us Christ Jesus, he gave us the Godhead bodily. He withholds no good thing from us.

Mrs. Dean had drunk deeply at this fountain of wisdom, so she was prepared for the gradual change in Irma; and being aware of her daughter's love and respect for herself, she gently held in check the tendency upon Irma's part to reserve. When possible, she spent her time in Irma's company, interested in all that interested her sweet young daughter, trying, oh, so hard, to counterbalance the influence being brought to bear upon Irma's mind just at this time. And after all this gentle effort it was so hard to have to realize at last that Irma had to give way, and see one, not so fitted by half, receive the honors of her class, and deliver the valedictory.

Irma blushed, and the tears came, when her mother's loving eye rested upon her as the other young lady stepped forward to play her important part in the evening's exercises. As the valedictory was delivered, and the diplomas awarded, she avoided her mother's eye as much as possible. So "doth conscience make cowards of us all." But when she arose to receive her diploma,



no one except that watchful mother was in the least aware of the situation.

Ralph Hughs gave her such a beaming glance of approval and admiration as she took her seat that again the air seemed to be filled with the refrain, Beware! Beware! Beware!



## CHAPTER IX.

ONE beautiful, bright summer afternoon Ralph entered the room where his sister Lela sat busy with some fancy work.

Ralph had never loved either of his younger sisters as he had loved the little playmate of his boyhood days, the sister so near his own age. But of late he had been trying to draw nearer to his youngest sister, Lela, and she responded readily; for she was of a very much more approachable nature than was Ada, who in many respects resembled her mother. As Ralph took his seat upon the sofa by Lela's side, he gently disengaged her hands from her crochet silks, and laid the work upon the table, remarking as he did so:—

“Come out into the grounds for a stroll, Lela, please. I want a few moments' uninterrupted conversation with you.”

She readily complied with his request. As they left the yard proper, and entered the flowers, he said:—

“Lela, I have a request to make of you, about the first I have ever made. I wish you to call upon the Dean family with me. I know what is right, and proper, and according to ‘good form,’ and I assure you so does Mrs. Dean. While Mr. Dean is more indifferent upon these points,—Mrs. Dean makes me feel, every time that I venture to call, that she recognizes the fact that she and her daughter are not receiving what is due them from my mother and sisters. I once appealed to the ‘lady mother,’ but met with a curt refusal. She made threats



of my being 'cut off without a cent,' and other dire calamities, if I could not raise my matrimonial aspirations higher.

"I frankly confess that I love Irma Dean. She is my equal in many things, my superior in more. Her family is the equal of mine in all essential points. Mrs. Dean has been a social queen by mother's own showing, but she gave up all when she became a Seventh-day Adventist. Of course I dislike that name, and mother cordially hates both the name and those who bear it. She would not own to this, but it is none the less a fact. I know you will be pleased with the family, if you can lay aside your preconceived dislike, and go with me to call this afternoon. I will order a carriage and we will take it on Main Street. Will you go?"

Lela hesitated a moment. She knew she would be severely censured by her mother, but this particular mother had not so loved and labored, and so builded, as to receive from her daughters that obedience of both spirit and letter that is every true mother's due. Then Lela knew her mother was wrong. So she decided to accompany Ralph, and frankly told him so.

Mrs. Hughs was now beginning to reap what she had sown. She had thought to bind her children to her by her imperial commands, instead of drawing them by the silken cord of love. She knew not, nor cared, whose heart ached, so her dignity was not compromised, her name not lowered in the social scale, nor her design for her only son thwarted. She wished him to marry a belle and beauty, who was a friend and favorite of her own. So we can see what Irma would have to brave, if she entered this family. Beware! Beware! Beware!



Lela carried out Ralph's plan by dressing herself hastily, and meeting him in the parlor. They at once proceeded to the business part of the city, and took the carriage that Ralph had ordered by telephone. Arriving at Mr. Dean's home, they dismissed the carriage, and planned to return upon the street car.

When their cards were presented to Mrs. Dean and her daughter, a look of satisfaction was visible upon Irma's face as she passed them to her mother. Of course there was nothing left for Mrs. Dean to do but to descend and receive her callers, which she proceeded at once to do. She was followed in a few moments by her daughter. After the introductions were over, and Irma's slight shyness had worn off, she ventured to examine Lela. She was much pleased, and was glad to note that her mother was also favorably impressed. The call was prolonged beyond the conventional limit, and all seemed to enjoy it.

As Ralph and his sister reached the street, he eagerly inquired:—

"Well, Lela, how do you like them? Is it not as I said?" She replied, "Yes, they are pleasant, cultured people, but oh, Ralph, they dress so differently from our set. Miss Dean does not even wear corsets. Just think what you will have to bear from the 'lady mother,' if you persist in this. You will be compelled to bring your wife home to live; for the opposition will be so strong that our father will not allow you a sufficient amount to keep up a stylish establishment of your own, and you will be too proud to live in a simpler manner. Now, I would say, Look before you leap; for you are not yet committed, as I take in the situation,"



“No, I have never asked Irma Dean to be my wife, but I intend to do so quite soon. She is now through with school life. At least, if I can influence her, she is. There was once much talk of a ‘medical missionary course,’ which was to fit Irma for work in foreign lands, but I hear nothing more of it. I said all I dared say against it, but in such a manner as not to arouse her opposition. Now I must say that Mrs. Dean is as much opposed to Ralph Hughs as Mrs. Hughs can possibly be to Irma Dean.”

“Yes, but that fact will only make the ‘lady mother’ more bitter, and I fear a stormy time for you. Or, if mother should yield seeming consent to your wishes, and you should marry, and bring your wife to our home, do you not know that our mother and Ada would be so cruel in their stabs and innuendoes that they would press the very life out of that sweet young girl? Do not subject her to this. If you marry her, join your modest inheritance with whatever means she can command, and establish you a home, and live quietly, and I will be your friend, true and tried.”

“I thank you, Lela, but I could not bear to see my wife live in less style than my mother and sisters. I sometimes wish that I had learned a profession, as I once desired to do, but mother forbade, and father was weak enough to yield, and while I have always had a will of my own,—which fact you say my eye bespeaks,—I did not bring it to bear in that. However, it is too late now. But if I were like the people who make up the body of the Adventist denomination, I would calmly proceed to do anything of the kind even if I was forty years old. I never saw such people.”



“Look out Ralph, you will be an Adventist, yet.”

The look of determination often noticed in his gray eye leaped into life at this suggestion.

“Never; and it is my intention to so influence Irma Dean, after she is my wife, that much that is now eccentric and peculiar in her manner and dress, will be overcome.”

We hope the Adventist girl who reads this will stop and think. Nay, we pray that she will hesitate ere she encourages the advances of anyone who will ever express such sentiments as we see entertained by Ralph Hughs. Yet, he is everything to be desired, so far as one could judge by appearances. Again we say, Beware, Irma, beware! Beware, my fair young readers, beware! Beware, fathers, beware!

Pray on, faithful mothers, pray on!



## CHAPTER X.

SOME time elapsed after the call made by Lela and her brother upon the Dean family before there were further developments, so far as Lela could see. She, however, thought there were indications upon Ralph's part that boded no good to Mrs. Hughs's pet scheme, that he should wed her special pet and social favorite, a girl older than Ralph, but so well preserved that, seen by gas-light, she "passed muster" all right.

Lela sometimes felt inclined to inform her mother of the bitter disappointment that was in store for her; but knowing what a storm it would raise about Ralph's head, she waited.

Ralph went one day to call upon Mr. Dean at his place of business, and finding him alone, plunged at once into his subject. He began by saying, "Mr. Dean, I have called to ask your permission to try to win your daughter for my wife. I know that you are surprised, and fear that you will object, too. I know that you think that it will not do for your daughter to marry a man who holds other than your own peculiar religious views, but I feel free to say that your daughter's feelings are as much engaged as are my own. I am too much a man of honor to have made a proposal to her, without first trying to win your consent; but I tell you frankly that she loves me. If you oppose, you will give her as much pain as myself."

Here he paused. Mr. Dean was shocked; for in spite of all that Mrs. Dean had said, he did not think it possible



that this was to be the result of the seemingly harmless friendship that he for sometime past had been trying assure himself was all that existed between his daughter and Ralph Hughs. While he had become somewhat uneasy of late, he had tried to throw off the feeling; and, in fact, he was just enough joined to his old-time idols of wealth, position, good blood, etc., to be pleased with Ralph Hughs's slight intimacy with his family. He had played with fire, expecting to escape unscorched, but now found himself mistaken. O fathers! is he, of all the fathers in our body, alone in this? We fear not. Indeed, we know not. More than one panders to the polished man of the world, just for pride's sake, and because of a *lack of backbone*. "Strait and narrow is the way" indeed, and "few there be" who are found walking therein. For too strait and too narrow is this way to admit of anything but the sinner; no sin can enter with him. No trace of the former life can be permitted to linger. One thing after another must be dropped until we stand complete in Him, without spot or blemish. And we should use no self-deception, for "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

How many are to awaken, as it were, from a pleasant dream, as truly as this father was awakened, when it is too late to mend the evil done; too late to go back and gather up the rays of light and live them out; too late to place things back as they once were, much as they may wish to do so!

Thus it was with Mr. Dean. While he was flattered with Ralph's respectful and deferential manner toward himself, and rather pleased that a young man of his style



should call at the house, or step into the family pew at church and afterward accompany them home, or be seen sometimes walking down town in his company, to the slight surprise or possible envy of a brother whom they might meet, he had not up to this moment forced himself to face the possible result of all this. Face it now he must, and face it at once. He paused a moment before answering Ralph, and then said:—

“I am sorry, but I can not possibly give you an answer until I consult with my wife, and talk earnestly with Irma, or have her mother do so.”

Poor mother! It is ever the mother who has the saddest part to perform.

Ralph acquiesced in this, of course, and making an appointment to meet Mr. Dean at the same hour and place the following day, he withdrew; but not before he saw that Mr. Dean did not look so favorable upon him in the light of a suitor for Irma's hand as he had hoped. This only served to arouse his will, and he became more than ever determined to win Irma Dean for his wife. His slight vexation boded no good for Irma's future peace of mind, for he said, “But for her religion, there would be no opposition.”

BEWARE! BEWARE!



## CHAPTER XI.

As Mr. Dean entered the room where his wife sat reading, she at once saw that he was perplexed, and she almost intuitively divined the cause. Yet she waited for him to speak; this he did at once.

“Well, mother, you were right and I was wrong. I risked too much in permitting Mr. Hughs to call here so often. He came to see me this morning, and frankly confessed his love for Irma, and gave me to understand that the feeling is mutual. Do you think this is really the case? I know that you have often expressed this fear, but I just could not realize the situation. As I said at first, I thought Irma too well intrenched to be so easily influenced, and I could see no objection to the young man as a social acquaintance.”

Mrs. Dean raised her heart to God in silent prayer before replying. It was so hard for her to refrain from saying, “I told you so.” But she did not say it; nor did she burst into the flood of tears that threatened to overwhelm her. Instead, she faced the situation calmly, and answered, quietly:—

“Yes, I think Mr. Hughs is right. I think that our daughter’s heart has forever passed from her keeping. Whether it has been worthily bestowed or otherwise, the future alone can tell. I have endeavored to get you to see what I saw, but in vain. It is now too late to do aught but make the best of the situation, and accept it as it is. Irma will never be received upon a social equality by Ralph Hughs’s family. She will enter it under protest, and I foresee much woe for her.



"I do not know just what to say. Unless she is fully consecrated to the Lord, it will be useless to insist upon her giving it all up at this late hour. If she had been fully converted, she would never have yielded to the tempter, and given her heart outside the fold. Long and earnestly have I talked and prayed with her. She is just as sweet and gentle as can be, but I see that she loves with the first and only love of her fair young life. No one else has ever thrown a shadow across her young heart.

"O my husband, you were short-sighted when you influenced me to permit her to first visit where she met such men as Mr. Hughs. She told me that at Sister B——'s, where she was invited to dine, there were courses of flesh meats served: baked fish with white sauce, mutton roast, with lentil gravy, and roast turkey with cranberry sauce. Of course, she did not touch these; but I doubt not that Mr. Hughs thinks such things are common among us, and will be very much surprised when Irma steadfastly refuses to partake of such food.

"Woe unto those who have the light upon these points, and walk not in it! Woe unto those who place such food upon their tables at this time! O my God, help them, that they may not become stumbling-stones in the cause of Christ. When will the lusting for flesh — the 'bloody morsel,' as Dr. K—— so fitly puts it — be taken away from our people? I saw in a secular paper of yesterday that in this State the fish in a certain reserve were dying by the hundreds, their gills actually rotting with a disease which corresponds in character to consumption in the human family; it was thus pronounced by those who investigated the matter. The outside



world, even, recognizes that there is something dreadful imminent. When our people see and know this, and more,—that is, they know what these things mean,—and then persist in using milk, butter, eggs, flesh, fish, and fowl, I think they may expect to receive retribution here in this life; and surely those who persist in this course will not have a home in the earth made new. O my merciful Heavenly Father, help us to ‘cleanse the camp,’ and to put out every ‘golden wedge,’ and every ‘Babylonish garment.’ Help, I pray thee, that we may soon become a ‘peculiar people’ indeed, and most ‘zealous of good works.’ But good works will be void of effect without right living. To eat and drink to the glory of God is the thing now, and it is the point where those who fall by the way, will first fail.

“When will we sense our danger and ‘flee the wrath to come’? Already there are strange diseases abroad in the land. The ordinary physician does not know what to say or do in the face of these things; but we know that all this is only another sign of the times. My Father, help, that we in truth ‘prepare to meet our God.’

“I am almost too sad to talk with Irma, but if you think best, of course I will try. Pray that strength and wisdom be given me.”



## CHAPTER XII.

MRS. DEAN slowly and sadly left the room, and going to her own apartment fell upon her knees, and poured out her soul in prayer to God. She cried aloud for help, for strength, and for wisdom. Long and earnestly she besought the Lord to help her dear neighbors and friends to see what she saw in regard to healthful living. She begged the Lord to have mercy upon those who, she felt, had set their table as a snare, as it were, and had been instrumental in bringing her beloved child in contact with the worldly element from which she had striven so hard to protect her.

After becoming more composed, she sought her daughter. Irma sat looking dreamily out of the western window. The landscape was indeed entrancing; for the sun was just sinking out of sight, leaving the horizon all crimson and gold. But the young girl did not seem to be drinking in the beauty before her. She was out of tune with the divine harmony, so was not in touch with nature, grand and glorious as it was. Irma started slightly as her mother, after gently rapping, entered the room; nor did she at once meet that mother's earnest look bent so lovingly upon her.

"I hope your communion with your Elder Brother is free and sweet, my dear. It is just at this hour that we have the glorious privilege of mingling our prayers with the incense being offered by the angels in heaven. Shall we bow and worship together?"

Irma fell upon her knees sobbing; her gentle mother



kneeled by her side encircling her form with those loving mother arms. Oh, how that mother yearned over her child! How readily she would have sacrificed life itself to spare her child one pang of grief; yet how little she could do to shield if that child would not permit the shielding. The scene and prayer were too sacred for any but angel eyes and ears.

After some moments we find them sitting side by side, hand clasped in hand, and the mother endeavoring to perform her duty. She gently said:—

“Irma, this morning Mr. Hughs sought a private interview with your father. Can you not imagine the purport of this interview? Do you not know what the subject of the conversation was? Be frank, my daughter, painful as you must know this to be to your mother.”

Irma threw herself into her mother's outstretched arms, and exclaimed:—

“O mama, I wish I had not gone to Sister B——'s to that ice-cream supper and afterward to that dinner. I knew that you were not aware then how worldly was the element of her home. It was there that I first met Mr. Hughs, for he is ever an honored guest in that home; and they are so little like the stricter members of the fold that he scarcely noticed any difference in them and his own ‘set.’ It was not until he began to visit here and know you that the great difference became apparent to him, and then it was too late for us both. Mama, what am I to do? I have fought against this. I wish papa had said, “No,” when Mr. Hughs first wrote to call. But papa knew of his intimacy with Sister B——'s family, and I think papa was pleased that he should call here, too.”



Mrs. Dean earnestly wished that her husband could have heard this from Irma's lips, for the wife knew it to be only too true. Are there any other Mr. Deans in the fold? Mrs. Dean continued:—

“I suppose he has acted strictly honorable with you, has he, Irma; that is, he has not yet spoken to you?”

“Not in so many words, mama, has he asked me to be his wife, but in many ways he has made known his feelings toward me.”

“I suppose then, you have made your choice, between him and your God, so to speak? or, at least, between wifehood and your at one time chosen life work, that of a foreign missionary? I hear nothing more of your desire to take the course when school opens this next session.”

“O mama, when I first knew him, and heard him talk of foreign lands, I then thought the delight of my life would be to take the missionary course, become a foreign missionary, and—yes, I confess the dream was not complete without him as a helper.”

“But he does not approve of all this, I suppose,” said the mother.

“Now, mama, do you not know that he has never dared to say what he approved or disapproved?” Here Irma paused abruptly.

“No, possibly not in so many words, as you say, yet my little daughter feels satisfied that, if she becomes the wife of the aristocratic Mr. Hughs, foreign missionary work for her will have to remain ‘foreign,’ indeed. Is this not so?”

A wave of crimson swept over Irma's face, but she bowed her head in assent.

“My daughter, what more can I say to you than I



have said already? You must realize the fact that you will be received into the Hughs family under protest, as one might say. In fact, you may not be received at all, and may be instrumental in bringing great sorrow upon the young man who has won your love. Do you think you can be brave, and keep the Sabbath day holy in his palatial home? I recognize the fact that he will never consent to dwell with us; you, of course, will have to go with him. Are you prepared for the ordeal? Can you sit at his table, and refuse the flesh foods that will be offered you, and endure the polite snubbing you will receive in consequence of your persistent refusal of such things, and in consequence of your dress, and observance of the seventh-day Sabbath? I, of course, could insist that your father bring parental authority to bear, and that this all be given up, but that is not the way God deals with his creatures; and should earthly parents be less merciful? As I have tried so often to put all this before you, I do not think you will take the step unwarned. And I say to you again, my little girl, Beware!"

"O mama, do you not think that my influence might bring him into the truth? He surely will not object to my keeping the Sabbath, or eating or drinking as I wish, or as God says."

"This very remark, my dear, shows how very little you understand human nature, or the strength of Satan's power."

"Well, mama, I know of one sister whose husband has been a saloon keeper, and he was converted, and is now superintendent of their Sabbath school."

"Possibly so. It is not impossible, but very improbable, and Mr. Hughs occupies a very different position



to that brother of whom you speak; Mr. Hughes is in a position to be self-satisfied. Nothing of the ordinary will be likely to disturb his equanimity. If the calm is ever broken, somebody's heart will be broken, too. But I will not prophesy more. God be merciful to us all."

"But, mama, there is Sister A——; look at her husband, how he is gradually coming to the Lord; how good and kind and liberal he is to her; how he provides for her, and attends all the camp meetings, and does so much by the distribution of literature and many other ways to advance God's cause. Do you think that an exceptional case, too?"

"Indeed, I do. You can never endure what she has borne; and then, she did not marry out of the faith, but was found of the truth long years after her marriage. So she has God and his Word and all the holy angels upon her side, and will win at last, I doubt not; but had she, with the light upon the subject that we have, wed out of the faith, then her fate would have been upon her own head."

The mother left the daughter here, and Irma seemed to hear, Beware! Beware! Beware! whispered in every passing breeze!



## CHAPTER XIII.

AFTER Mrs. Dean left Irma, she sought her husband. Long and earnestly they counseled together. Humbly they bowed and prayed. They did not dare so much to ask God's blessing as his mercy; just to be merciful to them all. Mr. Dean now saw that his wife had been right from the very first, from the time she objected to her daughter's visiting with those so worldly minded as to have introduced into their home-life all the customs and ways of the outside world; and he now began to see that those who would indulge appetite at any cost were, indeed, in a dangerous position, that their feet were in "slippery places."

After arising, humbled and subdued, from their knees, they decided that the best plan would be to allow Irma and Ralph to decide, trusting to Irma's well-grounded love for the Sabbath and her tenacious principles of health reform to enable her not only to stand firm herself, but to help others to take a stand for the truth. That was their only consolation now.

They probably felt somewhat like Mary and Joseph did, when they went so far on their journey before missing the child Jesus. All at once they awoke to the fact that they, too, had had a precious charge, but that through neglect, through carelessness, it had passed into the possession of another.

Dear Sabbath-keeping mothers and fathers, let us put on the whole armor of God, and stand with our faces to the foe. Let us be faithful in the little things, lest more



of us have the sad awakening which Mr. and Mrs. Dean had.

Ralph Hughs was prompt at the hour appointed for his interview with Mr. Dean, and received a more cordial greeting than he had dared to hope for. After an earnest conversation between the two men it was decided that Ralph should call to see Irma that evening. He was very grateful indeed for the consideration Mr. Dean had shown him, and so expressed himself as he took his leave.

As the hour drew near for this momentous interview, Irma was greatly agitated. She wept and prayed by turns, but not once did she waver in her feeling toward Mr. Hughs. Her gentle mother's subdued, saddened, but loving face was before her continually, shutting out almost everything else. As she dressed herself, once more, as upon the evening of Ralph's first call, she stood and looked long and earnestly at her own sweet young face reflected in her mirror. She saw something in the reflection now that was not there upon the first occasion; that is, a troubled look in the dark brown eyes, and dark circles beneath them, denoting wakeful nights and much weeping. Again she hesitated before descending, almost persuaded to forego this costly pleasure,—to do right for right's own sake, and most of all, for Jesus' sake; to be true to her mother's God in word, thought, and deed. But the tempter was there: the vision of the future arose to her view so barren. Should this sweet young dream be snatched from her. And not being of the material of which martyrs are made, again she yielded, and went to decide her own destiny. Oh, sad but true, to decide for one's self, to choose, as it were, and then deliberately follow that choice, and yet, when woe and heartache come,



to protest against the mysterious dispensation of Providence, and try to throw it all back upon the dear Lord.

If Irma marries Ralph Hughs, and enters his cold, cruel, cynical family, she will either develop a martyr-like spirit, or be forced to the other extreme, to give up all that is godly, all that is noble, all that makes life worth the living. Which will it be? Dear young reader, which?

Beware!



## CHAPTER XIV.

As upon the occasion of Ralph's first call, he, this evening, was shown into the library, where he found the family assembled. After the usual greetings, he, in a manly way, went over and stood by Irma's side, and said:—

“I suppose, Miss Dean, that your parents have acquainted you with my desires.”

He paused, and his eyes rested questioningly upon Irma's pale face. She bowed.

“And what is to be my fate?” he asked.

Irma felt that the eyes of her parents were bent earnestly upon her, and she knew that God and the holy angels were looking on. Her mind swept back to Eden, and to the happy pair ere sin entered. She knew she was venturing upon dangerous ground; for she realized it was risking much to link her fate, her life's interest, with an ungodly man, who was not even a *believer* in the peculiar faith which was the characteristic of her family. Yet so strong is the love of the natural heart that when Ralph extended his hand toward her she for a moment allowed her own to rest upon his palm, thus committing herself. At this moment her mother and father, in turn, with tearful eyes and trembling lips, pressed a loving kiss upon Irma's brow, and clasped hands with Ralph. Thus was Irma betrothed to the man of her choice. But Mr. Dean did not let the occasion pass without speaking fully to Ralph about the tenets of the faith held by Irma, and in closing said:—



"Be it understood, Mr. Hughs, that you will place no restrictions upon my daughter as to her keeping holy the Sabbath of the Lord, nor try to coerce her into using a class of foods not blessed of the Lord."

"She shall use her own pleasure in those things, sir. Of course I have known all the time that you observed the seventh day, and considered it holy, but as to your extreme views in regard to food, I know nothing. It is true, I have taken dinner and attended entertainments at your friend, Mrs. B——'s; and it was there, you know, that I first met your daughter. But I assure you that her table was spread with much the same food, and served in much the same manner, that is to be observed in other families of like means."

Mrs. Dean bowed her head and wept, while Mr. Dean said, "I fear this is all too true." Ralph continued: "Why, yes, upon one occasion, I know she even served ham. It was to a wealthy young guest, who ate no other kind of meat. I saw this myself. Though I am not prepared for your straight-laced ideas as regards your daughter's diet, I assure you I shall let her choose for herself."

Ralph could not help thinking with a pang of his mother and Ada, but his heart warmed when he thought of Lela.

Oh woman! What an opportunity for good or evil is yours! Beware how you use or abuse your opportunities!

We should be sorry to stand in that woman's place who, to pander to the perverted appetite of a wealthy young guest, placed that forbidden food upon her table.

Mrs. Dean here spoke for the first time. She said: "Mr. Hughs, in direct contrast to the incident you have just related, I wish to give you an experience of my own;



something which occurred at my own table. I had a lady friend living in a city a short distance from my home, of whom I was very fond, and who returned my fondness with interest. She sent me word that upon a certain Sunday she and her husband would drive over and take dinner with me. That in itself should not have been a surprising fact in a well-regulated household; but as my friend had never been seated at a table where hygienic food was served, and, what was sadder still, her husband, while an exceedingly intelligent man, was an infidel, the situation became serious. I had a severe conflict with myself. Should I, to pander to his perverted taste, set such food upon my table as I knew to be condemned by the Word of God, the laws of hygiene, and moreover by good common sense? or, should I stand firm, and serve a dinner to the glory of God?

“Now, while my husband was not at that time fully converted to the whole truth as taught in the Word of God, he was ever good and kind to me, so I was permitted to serve my God without hindrance on this point. But upon this occasion he was disturbed, and said: ‘You will at least serve roast fowl, will you not?’ I said, ‘No.’ When I led my guests into my dining-room, with which I had taken great pains for the occasion, I saw my husband gave my table a quick glance, and detected a look of satisfaction spread over his face, which relieved me, I assure you. As the dinner was served, my friend was won completely. She was at first tolerant of the food, then pleased, next delighted, lastly *enthusiastic*. The thoroughly cooked legumes were a revelation to her, as were the many varieties of delightful breads, all unleavened; a beautiful cake, also unleavened, except by air;



quite a variety of fruits and nuts, and nut preparations, caramel coffee, etc. No flesh, fowl, or fish, milk, butter, or eggs were upon the table. The last course, which consisted of home-canned peaches with almond cream, accompanied by cake and wine,—the pure juice of the grape,—seemed to be much relished, especially by my friend's husband.

“After dinner she turned to me, and said: “What a dinner! A repast fit for a queen; and nothing suffered, nothing shed its blood, or yielded up its life, to furnish the feast. I am a convert to your ideas of proper diet. It is simply delicious.’ Nor could her husband say her ‘nay;’ he even looked approval. And so ended the triumph of my life in that line; for I had stood firm, done my duty, and came out victorious. I had entertained my friends and glorified my God, all through the power of Jesus, who strengthened me. Oh, I would that Sister B—— had been so sustained, and not have brought this reproach upon the Saviour's cause!”

As Mrs. Dean ceased speaking, her face was fairly illuminated, and Ralph experienced a feeling of awe, such as he felt the evening he heard Irma pray.



## CHAPTER XV.

RALPH felt that really the hardest thing in store for him yet remained to be met, and that was to come to an understanding with his own family, especially with his imperious, cool-calculating, unwomanly mother. To combat her prejudices he felt to be a Herculean task. But his Napoleon-like will came to his aid, and he determined to set about the task at once. So, soon after breakfast on the morning following his betrothal to Irma, he sought his mother; knowing that he had less to fear from his father than from her, he preferred to brave it out with the "lady mother" first. As Ralph entered his mother's apartment, she instinctively felt that he had something of importance to say, and she was not entirely surprised as to its character, for she had felt for some time that a crisis was coming.

Ralph, as was his way, went at once to the point, saying:—

"Mother, you positively refused to recognize Miss Dean, as Miss Dean. I hope the same condition will not exist when she is no longer Miss Dean, but Mrs. Ralph Hughs; in other words, when she is *my wife*; this I intend she shall be just as soon as it is convenient for her."

The look that leaped into the eyes of Mrs. Hughs, was, to a close observer, ominous indeed, ominous of pain and *woe* for Irma Dean, the innocent cause of the fall of Mrs. Hughs's beautiful castles built for Ralph's future. To see him wedded to the soulless, china-doll beauty who was the reigning belle of the season, the idol of this



social set, would have been an exquisite pleasure to his ambitious mother. To be foiled in her pet scheme, and by an Adventist girl, was just a little more than Mrs. Hughs could bear with equanimity. But she was too politic to let her real feelings again appear upon the surface, for she perceived that Ralph had taken his stand, and knowing him as she did, she felt that it would be useless to say much any way. She had already used the most powerful lever, according to her way of thinking, and that was the threat to influence his father to disinherit him, and as that failed, she did not see what could succeed. So she discreetly held her peace, and waited early date, and ended by saying:—

“Miss Dean has consented to be my wife, but she knows nothing of your bitter prejudices. If she did, I do not suppose I could induce her to enter the family. Of course, both she and her well-bred mother know that they have been practically ignored by you so far. But, mother, again I appeal to the heart within you; please lay aside your prejudices, come out, and do what is right; call upon Mrs. Dean and her daughter. Will you not do that for me, your only son? Surely you will!”

Not one line of Mrs. Hughs's face softened; not one bit of the fire in her eye abated. No, not a spark of love-light could be seen there; no response to the heart-cry of her boy. Oh, woman, of what are you made? Adamant could be no more unyielding than you prove yourself to be. How can you refuse to grant your son's reasonable request?

As Ralph perceived that the effort was useless, he desisted, and arising, said:—



"I will leave you to break the news to Ada. Lela is in my confidence. I shall appeal to my father; I believe he has more tenderness and consideration for me than *you*, my mother. Mother, indeed," he murmured through clinched teeth, as he descended the stairs two at a time. He at once sought his father, who at this early hour was sure to be in the library.

As Ralph approached Mr. Hughs, the young man thought that if his father turned as coldly from him as had his mother, he would simply walk out, and never return to that elegant pile of brick known as "Hughs, the banker's, place," but which had never been a home in the true sense of the word. "Home is where there is one to love us; home is where there is some to cheer." This had not been the case in the Hughs household. The father's one object had been to amass a colossal fortune, in which he had succeeded. He thereby heaped together treasures for the "last days," not knowing, poor rich man, of the woe pronounced upon those so engaged. The mother lived for pride, as he had for wealth. To shine in the "four hundred," to be known as the most elegantly dressed woman in her "set," to give the most stylish entertainments, to own the finest turn-out on Main Street, and to see her daughters the admired of the admired,—all these were the sum total of her existence. Lela was the only one at all inclined to sympathize with or aid Ralph; for Ada was not behind her mother in anything.

And it was into this soil that our Irma, by her own choosing, was about to be transplanted. Beware! Oh, beware!



## CHAPTER XVI.

As we left Ralph approaching his father, we will return and know the result.

Mr. Hughs looked up in a surprised manner as his son took a seat by his side. Ralph at once began by saying, "Father, I know that we have never been confidential or sentimental with each other, and all that sort of thing; but you are at least my father, and have a human heart in your breast. It would probably have been best had I come to you in confidence long months ago; but I do come now, and I hope you will not treat me as my mother treated me — with absolute cruelty. She is as polished as an icicle, and just about as cold. O father! do help a boy!"

Mr. Hughs softened as his son spoke, and though he wondered if Ralph, with all his dignity, had been getting into debt, or falling into any of the vices so common among young men, he was prepared to be lenient, at least, and listened with interest as Ralph continued: —

"Father, do you think it an unpardonable sin to love a girl without having the rules and regulations of the affair planned for you by the 'four hundred'? Do you think you would have been satisfied to have someone else choose your wife, or would you have enjoyed having a voice in the matter yourself?"

The mind of Mr. Hughs reverted to his young days, when he loved to idolatry the proud, imperious beauty who no doubt wedded him for his dollars. But love her in those days he did; and as she had never really loved,



the father could enter into the son's feelings much better than could the mother. So Mr. Hughs concealed his surprise as best he could, and said: —

“ Well, my son, I should like to choose for myself, as I did; and I suppose, from the drift of your conversation, that you have taken the liberty to do likewise, and thereby offended the ‘ lady mother.’ Come, is that the situation? ”

“ Yes, sir,” said Ralph; “ that is the situation with a vengeance. Can you, or will you, give me your approval, thereby silencing the whole ‘ set ’ in a body? ”

“ I rather think I shall,” said Mr. Hughs; “ but let's hear the particulars. I thought that you were booked for Miss Golden, who is your mother's ideal of all that is desirable in a woman. Have you gone out of the ‘ set ’? Have you, indeed, been so thoroughly original as to love a flesh-and-blood woman? If so, I am interested, and enlisted upon your side at once.”

“ Yes,” said Ralph, “ I have dared to step out alone, and am therefore to receive the ‘ cut direct,’ I suppose.

“ Not if I know myself,” said the father. “ But you have not yet told me the name of the maiden fair.”

— Ralph still hesitated. “ Well, father, you will be surprised, to say the least, when I tell you that she is the only daughter of an intelligent, refined Adventist family, living on the opposite side of the city from us. Miss Irma Dean is the name. I shall not go into rhapsodies over her at all, but I wish you *could* meet her, and judge for yourself.”

“ Why, Ralph, this is a surprise, indeed,” replied his father. “ I was prepared to hear that the girl of your choice was poor, but as to this Adventist business, you



do not know so much of *that* as I do. They are all a lot of time-setting fanatics. I know whereof I speak. Your grandfather has told me all about the stir they created in religious circles away back in the 'forties.'"

"Yes, I know," said Ralph; "but, father, Mr. Dean explains *that* even, as being a fulfillment of prophecy; and I am sure that need not cause you to dislike Miss Dean, who, like myself, was not born for a generation after that occurrence. Now do not be like all the others, ready to condemn everything connected with the Adventist people, even before you come to know them."

Mr. Hughs shook his head, and remained silent for some time. At last he said:—

"Ralph, those people do not even eat, drink, nor dress like the world to which you belong. My son, I think you will place yourself in a very painful position, knowing your mother as you do, if you bring into the bosom of our family a girl as totally unlike your sisters, as my imagination leads me to suppose Miss Dean to be. However, it is not for me to suppose, nor oppose too severely even this step; for, as I said, I am enlisted in your favor."

Ralph felt that he had gained much, and told his father that he greatly appreciated the position he had taken. He said it was his desire to be married at an early date, and ended by saying:—

"I suppose, father, you can at least influence the 'lady mother' to attend my marriage. As you say, I will be compelled to bring my wife to your home for the present, and I do not see how I can induce her to come if my mother persists to the end in ignoring Miss Dean's existence, as has been the case so far."



“Has she not yet called upon the family with you?” inquired Mr. Hughs.

“No, indeed,” said Ralph.

“Well, never mind; I will see that my only son is treated with due respect, at least as far as appearances go,” replied his father. “Now, I must go to my office. I suppose your allowance is sufficient for your immediate expenses?”

“Yes, sir, thank you,” said Ralph.

Thus it was that the bomb was burst in the Hughs family.

We will next listen to a conversation between Ada and her excited mother. It took place in Ada’s private apartment. Mrs. Hughs entered the room, and as far as was consistent with her dignity, banged the door after her.

Ada threw a French novel on the table, and exclaimed:—

“Why, mama! how you startled me! I was up until two o’clock last night at the ball, and arose at eleven this morning; so you see I am nervous. Please be seated, and then try to tell me what the trouble is; for your face indicates something serious indeed.”

“Yes, ‘something serious indeed,’ it is,” said Mrs. Hughs. “Can you credit your senses when I tell you that Ralph is to be married soon, and to that Miss Dean of whom he once spoke to us? His father has laid his commands upon me that we *all* at once prepare to attend the wedding in the most approved manner, under the penalty of having our allowance stopped, and losing our trip to Europe, if we refuse. Just to think of *that* girl,



who dresses like a Quakeress and eats like a Jewess, being forced into *my* family in any such manner!"

Ada was all life now. "Why, mama, I thought Ralph had come to his senses, and would do as you wished, and secure the hand and fortune of Miss Golden."

"So I had hoped; but alas, my hopes were in vain," said her mother. "This is a stern reality."

Here Mrs. Hughs came as near breaking down as Ada had ever seen her; and while the daughter pressed a bit of lace to her own eyes, she sought to comfort the outwitted, worldly-minded, ambitious woman who sat by her side.

"Well, mama, let us make the best of it. I suppose Miss Dean will be easily subdued and held in check, and I think you and I can manage her. As for Lela, I fear she has 'gone over to the enemy;' for I believe she is Ralph's ally."

Mrs. Hughs took some comfort from the idea that she and Ada could soon subdue Irma; but the thought that she had to bend to her husband's iron will and make at least a show of tolerance, was just about the bitterest cup that this vain woman had ever had pressed to her lips, and the venom engendered by the situation boded no good for poor little Irma.

Oh, beware! Dear Sabbath-keeping girls, beware!



## CHAPTER XVII.

ONCE more Ralph was in the library at the home of the Deans, with Mr. and Mrs. Dean and Irma present. This time he was earnestly pleading with Irma and her parents that he be permitted to lead Irma to the altar at an early day. So eloquently did he portray the situation, saying that he could not settle down to any duty until Irma became his wife, that at last he received a reluctant consent, and a date just prior to the holidays was decided upon for the marriage.

Mrs. Dean then spoke of Ralph's promise that Irma should be permitted to keep holy the Sabbath day. Again Ralph reiterated this promise, and Irma's young heart grew light and buoyant. She began to think that mama and Aunt Prudence took too extreme views of the whole thing. She began to think that it would be an easy matter to get Ralph to see the Sabbath truth, to give up the use of swine's flesh and his fine cigars; in fact, that it would be easy to mold him anew, as it were; and by her own influence and example she hoped soon to induce him to become a regular worshiper in her own church. So hopeful are the young; so easily they deceive themselves, and mistake their own desires for the leading of the Spirit.

Irma was willing to do right, and anxious to obey her parents, provided duty and desire could walk hand in hand. She was deceived; for she thought that she was willing to let desire wait upon duty, while duty should influence her first of all. O Irma, sweet, young self-deceiver! So it is, when we play with fire, our gar-



ments are spotted, we can not escape the result. Dear child, you will "tread the wine press alone" before you are ready to do your duty regardless of circumstances.

Why will our youth not be guided in word, thought, and deed by those older and more experienced than they? We have in mind a mother whose sons heeded not her counsel. O my Father! what we have witnessed of that mother's soul agony would make angels weep. And fearful indeed were the results of the heedlessness of those youths; yet God in mercy permitted them to be chastened, that they should learn to fear the Lord, and thereby learn wisdom. For "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." But "perfect love casteth out fear." O my Father, speed the day when our youth will be perfect before thee, loving thee supremely above all earth's idols, above all clay, having no desire but to glorify thy name, no ambition but to excel in works for thee, no incentive but love for Jesus. If our noble youth can reach this plane, then is Satan vanquished indeed. It is so true that he at this time works mightily through our youth, knowing that if he can capture the rising generation, he will have a power indeed.

O young readers, arise as one body, gird on the whole armor of God, stand with your face to the foe, bid him open defiance, and rally around the banner, with Jesus for your Captain. Words could not express what we see and feel and fear in regard to the youth in the fold just now. We see how they are bowing as votaries at fashion's shrine, conforming to the ways of the world in customs and manners, being led away by perverted appetite to indulge in sweetmeats and rich confectioneries; and too often they are led on by those older and supposed



to be wiser. Even physicians and nurses furnish candies as refreshments when helpers are kept up later than usual at night. We are not on the alert as is the enemy. Oh, may we all awake to do our full duty! - Then we can safely leave the consequences with God; otherwise some one's blood will be upon our heads. So to all we say, Beware!



## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE earth was covered with its ermine mantle. It seemed as if all nature was wrapped in a winding sheet. Never had the cold been so intense. The suffering among the poor was appalling. Liberally did Mr. Dean give of his means to individuals, and to aid the Life-saving Mission in its efforts to rescue the perishing; for he believed in multiplication by division. Mrs. Dean was often seen with basket in hand, Job-like, seeking out those of whom she knew not. And what of Irma? As the time drew near for her to leave the home of her happy girlhood, she seemed to cling to that home with more devotion than ever before. She now began to realize that blessings brighten as they take their flight; yet she, too, went often upon errands of mercy for sweet charity's sake. But she seemed happiest when alone in parlor, library, or bedchamber, thinking, always thinking, of the momentous step she was about to take; and the time for that step drew rapidly near.

Her elegant though quiet wedding gown was completed and at home. She held her breath with something akin to awe when she looked upon it for the first time, and she could but think of a burial robe, so pure and white was the shimmering thing. But she strove to put aside every sad foreboding, and look forward with joy to her new life; and she would have been happy indeed, had the man of her choice been one of the faithful few who are striving to live so as to be of that company brought to view in Rev. 15:2. But as this was not so,



she hugged to her young heart the bright, delusive dream of woman's influence being so potent as to accomplish that which the Spirit of God alone can perform. Your dream is sweet, dear child. God help you at the awakening.

We will now listen to a conversation which took place between Irma and her mother a few days before her marriage. Aunt Prudence, who was a maiden sister of Mrs. Dean's mother, had arrived; she came that she might sustain and comfort Mrs. Dean during the coming ordeal. Irma had gone early to her room; in a short time she was joined by both her mother and Aunt Prudence. Irma busied herself by little nothings for several moments, seeming loath to seat herself at the cozy grate, where her mother and aunt sat conversing in subdued tones. They both seemed sad of late, and it is no wonder. At last Irma could find no further excuse for lingering at her dresser or table, so she took a low rocker a little apart from Mrs. Dean and Aunt Prudence. It was then that her mother said:—

“My daughter, let us kneel, and seek the Lord very earnestly; for I feel that we each have great need of his sustaining grace at this time.”

Without a word Irma sank upon her knees, and burying her face in her hands sobbed quietly, while both her aunt and her mother prayed in turn. She then tried to follow, but broke down, and quietly wept. As they arose from their knees, Mrs. Dean gently drew Irma to a seat, and said:—

“One more heart-to-heart talk with mama, dear. You are my own little girl yet; but only a few days now, and mama's arms will be empty; no little curly head



to pillow on my breast; no willing feet to step lightly to do mother's slightest wish. My home will be left unto me desolate. O, I know that you are going to protest that you will be my 'same little Irma;' that you will 'come every day;' that you will love me 'just the same,' and all such things; and you are sincere, too, and really think that you will be gentle, sweet Irma Dean to the end. But you will find yourself sadly mistaken, my dear."

It is impossible for a young girl to know the heart-ache of a fond mother when that mother is called upon to resign into a man's hands that most sacred of all earthly treasures, a pure, peerless young daughter. No wonder so many mothers weep as if they were attending a funeral instead of a wedding, when they see their daughters stand up to link their fate for time and eternity with that of man. How few prove true to the trust! How few men can realize all that it means to take a girl from her childhood home, from her mother's arms! How few there are who can in any sense enter into Mrs. Dean's feelings, as she sat and looked with streaming eyes upon Irma's face! A mother's heart is a wonderful thing, and a true mother would give its best blood to promote her child's happiness; so thought Mrs. Dean as she sat with her treasure, her only child, clasped closely in her arms. The mother felt that she would be resigning the greater part of her own life, joy, and earthly happiness in giving up this bright, winsome, loving creature, to even a devout, God-fearing Sabbath-keeper; but to give her up under existing circumstances seemed just now more than her mother-heart could bear. Not wishing to sadden Irma's young life more, she controlled her emotions, and said:—



“My child, I am like Paul, I know that you will have ‘sorrow in the flesh,’ but I spare you. There is one thing, however, of which I must speak. We have had too many pure, earnest conversations upon this one theme to let false modesty creep in now. You know that I was desirous that you should be married to some godly young man, who was wholly consecrated to the Lord, so that you could give your entire time to missionary work, and not be compelled to assume the duties of motherhood at all. You know my ideas upon this subject. I am sure the time is passed when helpless infants should be born into the Adventist ranks. We are told that no feeble, aged ones, or infants will be left among us. Now why it is that our dear brethren and sisters can continue to bring into this sin-cursed world, helpless, innocent little beings at this late day, I can not see.”

“I know all you have said to me about this, mama. I remember it, and often think upon and pray over it, too. But, mama, if it is as you and Aunt Prudence say, why is it that so many of the leaders, even, come up to the camp-meetings year after year, with newborn babes in their arms? There was Elder M—— and various other leaders. I do not understand these things, mama.”

“Alas! my daughter, what you say is all too true. And I deplore it greatly. One of our most devout brethren preached for us not very long since, and told us to begin to pray most earnestly that our ‘flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.’ I almost exclaimed aloud as he failed to sound in trumpet tones the woe pronounced in the preceding verse, Matt. 24: 19.”

Irma said not a word, and after kissing her good-night, Mrs. Dean and Aunt Prudence withdrew.



## CHAPTER XIX.

MRS. HUGHS saw that it would be useless to venture farther in open opposition, so she changed her tactics, and yielded a reluctant obedience to her husband's commands, and began preparation for the Hughs-Dean wedding; she had to go still farther and take her two daughters and actually call upon Mrs. Dean and Irma. Mr. Hughs also accompanied Ralph to call upon Mr. Dean.

The time was at hand for the marriage to take place. It was a severe struggle for Irma to yield to Ralph's pleadings that it be a "home" instead of a "church" wedding. It had been her girlish dream and heart's desire to have a "flower wedding" in their modest house of worship: but Ralph adroitly managed to induce her to change her plans. Although it was her prerogative to decide this point, yet she yielded, and this was only the beginning. Mrs. Dean was much pained by the change, but wisely held her peace; she was also much surprised, for she did not think it possible that Irma would have so easily yielded her privilege in this particular. But so it was. Ralph's real reason for wishing the change can be easily understood by those who know the situation in his own family. He was too much afraid of public opinion; he too much dreaded the tongue of "Mrs. Grundy" of the "four hundred" to brave having his marriage solemnized in that simple church building. For, while Irma's home was quiet, it was elegant; and he much preferred that his family should gather in the Dean parlors than be driven to the church where the Dean family wor-



shipped; and he also rather favored a "quiet wedding." This just suited Irma, and under different circumstances, would have much pleased Mrs. Dean; but as it was, she knew why he desired the affair to pass off as quietly as possible, and her face burned as she fully realized that already he was ashamed of Irma's environment. She shuddered as she dwelt upon the future of her child, that dear child, who had been so shielded in her home. She had been so respected and considered that it seemed impossible to the fond mother that anyone could be ashamed of anything connected with that gentle, beautiful young creature. She doubted the wisdom of keeping these things from Irma, but for once she thought ignorance bliss, and so kept the even tenor of her way, and trusted her God to overrule everything for his glory and the ultimate good of her child. But the mother spent almost whole nights in prayer, beseeching the Father to spare her darling, the apple of her eye, her almost idol, from the fate which a mother's intuition caused her to fear for Irma.

It was a glorious sight upon which Irma opened her eyes on the morn of her wedding day. Bright and beautiful shone the sun, crisp and invigorating was the air, and the earth was still robed in her bridal apparel; thus thought Irma as she viewed the scene from her window.

The marriage was to take place in the evening, so Irma had all day for the last lingering touches to be given to her already complete trousseau. At last the hour arrived, and she stood all white and still, while her loving mother with gentle touch arranged her wreath of natural orange flowers and the accompanying veil.

If she was beautiful as she arose to receive her diploma



upon that warm summer night a few months before, what can be said to rightly portray her extreme loveliness as she lingered just a moment to look shyly into her mirror. As she turned from her dresser, her mother pressed her to that yearning mother heart, and with a wave of her hand fell upon her knees. Irma did the same. There was no audible prayer, but angels wept over that scene.

As they arose, Mrs. Dean took her child, and led her as a lamb to the sacrifice,—so it seemed to the mother,—to the head of the stairs. There they were met by Mr. Dean and Irma's one intimate girl friend, who was to be her bridesmaid. It had been Mrs. Dean's request that she alone should assist Irma at her bridal toilet, so although Irma's friend was in the house, she did not see the bride-elect that evening until Mrs. Dean and Irma came to the head of the stairs. Irma's young friend almost exclaimed aloud as she viewed the picture of girlish loveliness presented by Irma Dean as she stood thus upon the threshold of her future; as she stood ready to sell her girlish liberty, and what is she to get in return? Ah, time alone will tell.

Pause, girls, you who like Irma are tempted to wed among the ungodly.

We are told in the Word that "blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." And our little Irma was just now to take the step that would put her in a position to do all of these. Beware!

It was a striking group that assembled near the upright piano in the Dean parlors. First came Mr. Dean with his beautiful daughter leaning trustingly upon his



arm. Then followed Mrs. Dean and Irma's friend. Ralph advanced to meet them, and by his side was his chosen friend. As Ralph received his bride, his friend and Irma's friend advanced, then separated, standing one on either side of the place chosen for the bride and groom.

As Mr. Dean resigned his daughter to Ralph Hughs, it was a solemn moment for that father and mother, and also for Irma, and a trying one for Ralph. O young man, do you sense your responsibility? Do you realize what it means to these fond parents to resign to you their "one lamb"? Do you hold as something most sacred the little trembling hand laid so confidently upon your arm? Will you guard her as the treasure of your life? Oh, Jesus and the holy angels look on with interest upon such a scene as this.

The Hughs family and their invited guests were startled at the picture before them. Lela rejoiced with her brother over the lovely girl he had won. Mr. Hughs could only look approval. Mrs. Hughs and Ada were vexed to think it possible the affair could be so perfectly in accordance with all that was desirable, all that was lovable, and in strict accordance with "good form." Just for a moment Mrs. Hughs was almost won. The little bit of motherhood in her came to the surface, and she was prompted to take that exquisite little white-robed creature into her arms, and let her nestle in her heart. But quick as a flash came Satan with his wiles to make her see in Irma the one thing standing between her and all her cherished plans for her son, who had been the object of a devoted, though selfish love of a selfish life. To see everything that she had hoped and planned thus



set aside by such an unpretentious girl was the bitterest moment of her life. And as Mr. and Mrs. Dean closed the circle around their daughter and Ralph, and the venerable white-haired minister, the friend of Irma's babyhood days, arose to perform the ceremony, it was a hardened, defiant face which Ralph's mother turned toward the almost holy-looking group, and it was a very conventional greeting that she bestowed upon her son's wife. Mr. Hughs was cordial, Lela warm, Ada icy, and Irma was — Mrs. Ralph Hughs.



## CHAPTER XX.

IT had been previously arranged that there should be an absence from the city for a few weeks, including a visit to some distant point of interest. Ralph wished this, and Irma acquiesced. Mrs. Dean did not approve; but knowing that it would not be wise, she did not remonstrate. She again "took it to the Lord in prayer," and there left it, and calmly proceeded to help her daughter change her bridal robe for a seasonable traveling dress, wraps, etc. In this loving service she was eagerly assisted by Irma's friend, and also by Lela, who just would not be denied the sanctity of Irma's room. She loved her brother's wife, and did not hesitate to show her appreciation of his choice. The time soon came for the young couple to go to the train, and as they bade adieu to Irma's parents it seemed to her that she was leaving half her heart behind her; but the cool indifference of Ralph's mother, and the almost open scorn expressed by Ada's face and manner, somewhat held in check her own emotions; and it was well.

Mrs. Hughs could but own that everything had been beyond criticism so far, although she wondered at the absence of refreshments of some kind. Finally, remembering what she had heard of Mrs. Dean's extreme views in regard to "health reform," with a sneer, she whispered to Ada, "Not even cake and wine, and some of *our* 'set' here, too."

But she had "reckoned without her host"-ess, for after Irma was gone, before the circle broke up, exquisite



flagons of quaint device were borne into the room, filled with the pure juice of the grape; and in glasses that were beautiful of design, each guest was served with the purest draft in the form of wine that Mrs. Hughs or her friends had ever tasted, as they were constrained to confess. When Mrs. Dean fearlessly explained why refreshments were not served at this unseemly hour, and that this was the kind of wine which Jesus made at the marriage at Cana of Galilee, there was nothing left for Mrs. Hughs to do but silently own that there was a "something," as Ralph had once told her, in Mrs. Dean's peculiar religious views that made her very "different from most women." But while she was forced to admire Mrs. Dean for the moment, she was prepared to treat with contempt and scorn any such views which Mrs. Ralph Hughs might entertain.



## CHAPTER XXI.

AUNT PRUDENCE, Mrs. Dean, and Miss Mildred B——, Irma's friend who stood up with her, were seated in Irma's cozy bedchamber. The night was far advanced, yet they sat, and talked, and wept by turns. It seemed as if there had been a death in the home, so sad and silent was everything now that Irma, the pet of the household, was really gone. At last Miss Mildred said:—

“Mama Dean, I wish to say this, I thank you for all the loving instruction you have let me share with Irma. I could just weep on and on, to think she has been the one to be wooed and won by an ungodly man. It seems beyond belief. Now I have for a long time been making a careful study of the Testimonies to learn all that has been written on the subject of the home. O I want to know everything that will help me in my future home life, if God should so will that I have a home of my own. I do not wish to be only a ‘house keeper,’ but a home maker in the truest sense of the word; and oh, how I do thank you for calling my attention to that startling little book of warning, ‘A Solemn Appeal,’ especially that article upon the ‘marriage relation.’ You may think it strong language for a young girl when I say, The man who claims my hand, will first read with me that article, and upon bended knees ratify the promise to be guided by its teachings.”

Mrs. Dean turned, and took the brave young creature into her empty mother-arms, and said:—

“How I do wish all our youth could say the same!



There would be fewer ruined homes, and broken hearts. I wonder how many of our older members have read that article, and the one entitled an 'Appeal to Mothers.' In fact, I should like to know how many are familiar with the entire work. A solemn appeal it is, indeed. O, would that we all were where God wants us in regard to these things, and upon the food question! The latter is, to my mind, the most important; for if we eat right, we will surely live right in every respect. And now that we have such wonderful light along this line, I do not see how we can go on in a careless manner.

"I think the points brought out lately in regard to our food are grand; the solemn, but beautiful truth that we can feed daily upon the body of our Lord, and that he gives us of himself in every meal of which we partake, is almost beyond the comprehension of finite minds, yet it is made very plain.\* I now feel every time I approach my table as if I approached the sacramental board, and I am praying my Father to help me keep my family board free of anything which could possibly mar this beautiful picture. I do not see how we can eat to excess with such a picture in our minds. I hope all have read, or will read and study, and make their very own, the beautiful thoughts contained in that number of the *Bulletin*. Alas! I am afraid those important sheets are not read and studied as they should be.

"When I think of the fact that we are told that we shall be held accountable for what we might have been, that we will not be excused for not knowing, when we might have known, I confess that I tremble for myself

---

\* General Conference Bulletin, Feb., 23, 1899.



and for others. When will we, as individuals and as a people, awaken to our full privilege in Christ Jesus? When will we read, study, and think, so as to be enabled so to live as to claim all the promises of God? Then we shall see 'the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.' "

Mrs. Dean, Aunt Prudence, and Mildred then bade one another good night.



## CHAPTER XXII.

SEVERAL weeks had elapsed since the solemn words were spoken which united Ralph Hughs and Irma Dean in bonds of wedlock, and they were in the palatial home of Ralph's father. It was near the set of sun upon Friday afternoon, and Irma was more miserable than tongue can express, and why? — Because the family were making preparations for a "reception" in honor of the newly-wedded pair. Poor little Irma could but feel that this was "malice afore-thought," although Mrs. Hughs protested to the contrary.

During the few weeks which she and Ralph spent alone, she had managed to observe the Sabbath most sacredly. She had pleaded with her young husband to excuse her from going out upon the Sabbath evening, and he stopped with her, so that those evenings had been the happiest they had known; for Irma would study and read, and had been able to make some points quite clear to Ralph. During their wanderings they had been permitted to spend one Sabbath in a city, where, upon inquiry, they had found an Adventist church, and O joy! Ralph had readily accompanied Irma as she went to worship. Irma's cup of joy ran over, as she sat in the pew with her distinguished-looking husband by her side. As she had not been where she could attend church for several Sabbaths, she was actually hungering for the "bread of life," and she enjoyed that Sabbath's privileges to the fullest extent. It was well, for it was the last before she returned home.



She turned her face homeward with high hope, doubting not that Ralph would accompany her at once to see her beloved parents, and that they would spend Sabbath night beneath her father's hospitable roof, and all repair to the house of worship upon Sabbath morning. But, alas! for all her cherished plans! they were dashed aside with one fell blow. Ralph had announced his intended home-coming, some days previous by a letter to Lela.

Irma had planned to reach home early in the day, Friday, so that nothing should interfere with her preparation for the Sabbath. But owing to a slight railroad accident, which caused a delay of several hours, the day was far spent when the carriage which met them rolled up to the "Hughs place" (always so called), and consternation seized Irma when she saw the festal preparations. Her heart sank below zero when, after formal greetings from all except Lela, who was kind and loving, Ralph informed her that his mother would "give a reception" in their honor that evening from eight to ten. "Just a select few, to welcome us home," he said. It seemed to Irma as if she would sink to the floor in despair. What should she do? What could she do?

First of all, she would have to forego the pleasure of seeing her mother that evening at all, but what most distressed her was that she would either be compelled to appear in the parlor and "receive" with the family, or openly rebel against her husband's expressed desires, and thereby cause him to be placed in quite an embarrassing position indeed. For he felt he could not be so brave as to stand up and tell why his young wife was not present, and Irma was too true to feign an illness which she did not feel, as an excuse, so she timidly ventured to



remind Ralph of his promise given her father to the effect that "she should be permitted to keep holy the Sabbath day." He with a slight impatience replied:—

"Yes, I remember all that, Irma; but you must have reason; circumstances alter cases. Who could have thought of the 'lady mother' planning this upon our arrival. I very much doubted that she would show us any courtesy at all."

Irma devoutly wished in her heart she had not, but loved her husband too much to say so. Irma was tempted to slip quietly away, and flee as a wounded dove to that safest and sweetest of all refuges, a loving mother's waiting arms. But pride and duty, and the desire to save that mother pain, all combined to prevent this unwise step. She wept and prayed every moment she was alone. She could not get her consent to desecrate God's holy day. There was just one scripture that brought any comfort, and that was, "Wives, obey your husbands," but she remembered how this had been explained as referring to those who are godly. It, at least, did not apply to those whose dictates were in direct opposition to the Fourth Commandment.

Ralph wisely left his wife to herself for some little time, although he was anxious, indeed, as to her decision. But the look of determination so often seen in his eye of late was seen there now, as he remembered his former triumphs. He took courage when he thought of how sweetly Irma had yielded to his importunities as to the place of their marriage, also, in regard to their visit taken afterward, and many minor points which she had yielded during that visit. So after a short time had elapsed, he sought his wife's apartment. He saw at a glance that



she had been weeping freely. He approached her, and clasping both little hands in one of his, gently drew her to a western window, at the same time looking anxiously into her face, and saying, "Why all these tears, little girl?" for they were still falling like rain. "Why this emotion and distress? Surely you are willing to do this for Ralph?"

Ah! the wiles of Satan! How he delights to have such an emissary as Ralph Hughs proved to be just then. Irma tried to stand firm. She desired to prove faithful! But alas! She was "walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, and sitting in the seat of the scornful." So she had no vantage-ground in this struggle. To this, add the powerful ally of first love, and is it any wonder that she yielded? We can only weep with her over her weakness, but we need not marvel at it. So we would say to any girl who is tempted to wed an ungodly man, Beware! Though Irma said nothing, Ralph knew that he had won, but being a born diplomat, he said not one word to let her know how intense was his relief, how great his exultation. He was not brave enough to have alone faced their guests that evening, or to have met his mother's eye while explaining the situation to her, or worse still for him, to frame a plausible excuse to Miss Golden, who was to be present. Irma was in blissful ignorance as to her very existence, but was destined to be enlightened upon this point before the evening was over.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

LELA did all possible to encourage Irma. But of course, no one in that family could enter into the poor young creature's feelings. To think she was so near her loving mother, and yet so far. She could not possibly go to her mother that evening, and how could she ever hold up her head, and look that mother fearlessly in the eye after that evening? It really seemed as if the weight of woe would crush her.

Already she was beginning to think back over the words of warning spoken by mama and Aunt Prudence. She was beginning to see that those who "walk in the counsel of the ungodly, and stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of the scornful" are in dangerous, oh, such dangerous places. She would at even this early period of her married life have held up a hand of warning, and cried out, Beware, to any young girl tempted as she had been. She was destined to be stabbed in more ways than one upon this fateful evening.

Upon returning to her private parlor after a few moments' absence, she at once noticed a newspaper thrown with apparent carelessness upon her table, yet it was in a conspicuous place. Picking it up, she began to scan its pages, more from a wish to find something, anything, to divert her almost distracted mind, than from any real interest she felt in the contents of that particular paper. But in a moment she sank almost fainting to a seat, as her eye rested upon the following sensational paragraph:—



## “ MISALLIANCE IN HIGH LIFE.”

“The ‘four hundred’ are amazed over the report of the marriage of Ralph, the son of Hughs, the banker, to a nonentity, so to speak, in fact, to an obscure maiden, Dean by name, the daughter of a religious crank, residing somewhere in the humbler portion of this city. Ralph Hughs was a bright, particular social star, and it is sad to know of his having brought about his own social eclipse. That his ‘set’ is regretful goes without saying, for a society wedding in which he was to act an important part was thought to be upon the tapis. Such is life.”

As Irma read these cruel words, it really seemed that she would smother, her heart beat so fast, while she sat almost paralyzed with pain and surprise.

Ralph entered the room. She made a slight effort to conceal the paper, and appear like herself, but in vain. As his eye caught the headline, he snatched the paper, tore it into fragments, and threw it into the grate, muttering between clinched teeth “curses upon Ada. I know she did this.” He just could not for a moment meet Irma’s look of pained surprise. Recovering himself in a measure, he said:—

‘All a lot of nonsense. I wonder who was careless enough to leave that paper for your eye to be pained by it. Darling, do not look so hurt and pale. Please come dress yourself, and let us go down, and show them their mistake as to a ‘*mésalliance*.’” Stung almost to a frenzy Irma arose, and began hastily to robe herself in her bridal gown. She had not worn it since her wedding day. As she looked upon the beautiful shimmering thing, she almost hated it; for she began to regret that it was not



made *à la mode*. You see Satan had in the newspaper article applied the very impetus needed to urge her on to folly. She was now determined to dress, and appear in the parlor with her husband. Nothing could have prevented her, save the manifest power of God. Alas! she had deliberately made her choice some time ago, and there was no miracle enacted to save her now.

There was no gainsaying the fact that she was exquisite as she entered the brilliantly lighted rooms, yet she had refused the proffered help of Lela's maid, and arranged her own toilet; but with her excellent taste and high ideal she never made a mistake. Add to this the excitement which made her blood course like fire through her veins, and we will not be surprised at the thrill of admiration which followed her presentation to every newcomer. She was apparently unmoved, even, when Ada with an elaborate introduction, presented "Miss Golden." Ada enjoyed Ralph's uneasiness, and lingered near with her friend just as long as possible. A few moments after this episode Irma heard Ada, in speaking to a "chum" — as she called her, remark, "Just do look at the contrast between those two. I know Miss Golden's dress cost not less than five hundred dollars, and to think that Ralph could have this evening presented her as his bride, had he not have made this *mésalliance*. My mother is almost desperate over his social suicide."

The scales fell from Irma's eyes at last. She now remembered how her dear, prudent mother had warned her of this, and had tried to impress upon her the fact that she would never be received as a social equal in the Hughs family. But the step had been taken, and she had to abide the consequences.



The evening passed, Irma scarcely knew how. It was all torture to her, for there was a sneer upon Ada's lips at every movement her brother's wife made, even to the "No, thank you," when wine was offered. But the guests departed, and Irma at last found herself alone in her own room, there to sob her life almost out in her bitter grief over her painful situation



## CHAPTER XXIV.

NEXT morning at the breakfast table there was an air of constraint. Ralph was gloomy, for there had been a stormy scene between him and his mother and Ada the night before. He had sought them out, after the evening's entertainment, and had hurled burning words of reproach and rebuke at them. They took on the air of injured innocence, and said they had "tried to please him, and introduce his wife into good society, and this was their reward," "just what they might have expected," and much more in like strain, until Ralph actually flung himself out of the room, in a frame of mind bordering on to the desperate. He rushed upstairs to Irma for comfort, but found that she had cried herself to sleep like a heart-broken child; for the long shuddering sobs were yet audible; as he stood conscience smitten, looking down upon her pitiful little face, upon which were traces of tears, while the hands thrown in utter abandonment over her head bespoke her frame of mind upon sinking into that restless slumber. So it is no wonder that the air at the breakfast table upon the following morning was one of constraint. Lela was kindly attentive to her sweet young sister-in-law; and as she saw Irma refuse with a gentle "No, thank you," buckwheat cakes and honey; codfish balls, Saratoga "chips," ham and eggs, hot biscuit and butter, French coffee with rich cream, and many other such delicacies (?), Lele quietly withdrew, and after some time returned with a plate of dry toast, and quietly placed



it by Irma's side, at the same time drawing the handsome center-piece of fine fresh fruit nearer, thereby showing her appreciation of the situation. Irma was very grateful for this kindness. She now began to see that mama and Aunt Prudence were right upon all points. It had been hard for her to believe it possible that she would thus early find it so difficult to eat and drink to the glory of God; but such was true. After a breakfast which no one enjoyed, the family separated. Mr. Hughs had partaken of his egg and toast, with a cup of coffee hours before, and so had not been present, much to Irma's regret, as she was beginning to love the stern old man; for she perceived that he possessed a spirit of justness that did not pervade the rest of the family, save Lela, who was very much like her father in many things.

As Ralph and Irma reached their rooms, she said hesitatingly, while she looked appealingly into her husband's face, "You will come with me to my church this morning, will you not?" How could he refuse? Yet how could he meet Mrs. Dean's penetrating eye? He made some insufficient excuse, and was turning away, when Irma burst into such a paroxysm of weeping that he feared the attention of the servants would be attracted, and hating anything like a "scene," he reluctantly consented to go with her. He said they would have to "go on the car down town, then take a public carriage." He could not brave the inquiry, and comments sure to be made if he ordered the home turnout at so early an hour, nor did he want the coachman to know where he was going.

Irma dressed hurriedly, and as she did so, her mind went back to the sweet, peaceful Sabbath mornings in her own home, the earnest prayer and sweet soul communion



with father and mother, the calm repose, and quiet preparation incident to going forth to the house of worship. And what a bitter contrast was here. She had spent but a moment upon her knees, for exhaustion had caused her to sleep late. She dressed in feverish haste. The late fashionable breakfast had rendered it now impossible for her to reach her house of worship in time for Sabbath school, and she realized that if they had to wait for a car, she would even be late for the sermon. We will leave the reader to imagine the emotions of each, as Irma and Ralph hurried in and took a seat, after the sermon was in progress.

Mrs. Dean was actually shocked to see her daughter there, and not to have been apprised of her home coming. Irma had purposely kept the time of her return from her mother, planning to give her a sweet surprise by going immediately to her. How she was prevented we know. Mrs. Dean knowing nothing of what had transpired, was scarcely able to preserve decorum upon Irma's hurried, embarrassed entrance into the family pew. But the Lord is sufficient for all things, and beyond a quiet kiss and a close hand-clasp no one knew of the emotions of those two hearts. Mr. Dean drew Ralph down beside him, and in an incredibly short space of time all was seemingly serene.

As soon as Irma could bring herself to listen, she gave her attention to the speaker in the pulpit. It was her same dear old friend, who stood before her. The first words to impress her were, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Many were the times she had pondered over this old, ever-new, always-precious promise, and she had thought she



understood the meaning of the words, but it had been left for this moment to reveal to her something in them she had never found before. Or was it that she had never been heavy laden before? Probably this was the secret.

After services Mr. Dean said, "This is a surprise, indeed. Of course you will both go home with us." To this there seemed no reply to be made. So they were soon in Irma's home. It would be impossible to describe the contending emotions in Irma's breast, as she once more stood in her own room. It was just as she had left it, only it had been restored to perfect order. As she once more looked into her mirror, her mind flew back to the occasion upon which she first consulted it so closely. It was upon the evening of Ralph's first call. Poor child! It seemed to her as she stood there now, that an age had passed since that eventful evening.

As deceit or subterfuge was totally foreign to Irma's nature, and her heart ached too sorely to feign a cheerfulness she did not feel, it was but a short time before she was sobbing out her grief upon her mother's breast. Clapsed closely in those loving mother arms, it seemed to the young wife that she was again shielded from every woe; and she thought with a pang of keen regret of the short time which she could possibly tarry beneath the roof of her dear old home. Mrs. Dean, with that wisdom which God alone can give, counseled, admonished, and encouraged her child, not once referring to the many warnings which had been given; but instead there was a prayer made for strength and fortitude for this young creature, that she might be kept, and enabled to walk so circumspectly that others, seeing her good works, would be constrained to glorify her Father in heaven.



After this season of refreshing from the Lord, Irma felt more cheerful, and was so like her own sweet self that Ralph blessed the moment that brought them home with Irma's parents.

The family was soon seated at the dinner table. As this was the first meal that Ralph had ever partaken of at this table, he was surprised indeed at the fare set before him. It was all a revelation to him, to think that one could enjoy such a delicious repast without flesh, fish, or fowl, milk, eggs, or butter, fats or sweets, save those contained in the nut preparations and fruits served; and to be informed that the cake was unleavened, save by air, the cream made from almonds, and many other such things, was surprising, indeed. He at once began to think of his wife, and remembered, with a start, how confidently he had promised Mr. Dean that Irma should "suit herself as to those things," when Mr. Dean had requested that his daughter be left free as to her religious proclivities. The young husband began now to see how utterly impossible it would be for Irma to "suit herself as to those things," so long as she sat at the board where his aristocratic, unfeeling mother presided. He remembered Lela's words of admonition, spoken the afternoon she called first upon Irma. His keen-sighted sister had upon that occasion warned him of all the pain he would bring upon Irma, if he subjected her to the ordeal of making her home in his father's house. Lela had advised him to set up a modest establishment of his own. But pride held such a thing in check then; it did the same thing now. His will was powerful when it came to swaying people to do what *he wished them to do*, but not powerful enough to overcome *self*, and



then compel such natures as his mother's and Ada's to yield to the thing that was right. So Irma's fate was sealed, so far as having to walk in the course of the ungodly, to stand in the way of sinners, and to sit in the seat of the scornful.

After dinner, and just before time to repair to the church for evening service, Aunt Prudence and Miss Mildred B—— came in. To say that they were surprised to see Irma but faintly expresses the situation; for it had so happened that they both had been engaged in missionary work that morning, and therefore missed the forenoon service. Miss Mildred saw at a glance that her little friend showed signs of weeping, and the older girl felt constrained to clasp the bride-wife in her arms and comfort her; but, realizing that it is always kind not to see that which one does not wish you to see, she forebore any outward show of sympathy, and they all proceeded to the church.

After the social meeting, Ralph and Irma went their way; and a sad "way" it seemed to Irma, despite her efforts to be cheerful and brave. Miss Mildred and Aunt Prudence both returned home with Mrs. Dean, and that evening we again find the three devout women grouped in Irma's bedroom. Mildred was to occupy the room, and Mrs. Dean and Aunt Prudence came in for a little good-night talk; and of course they soon began to speak of Irma, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and these three loyal hearts were abundantly full of thought for their pet just at this time. It was not much that either could say. Mrs. Dean could but tell them of the fearful ordeal through which Irma had passed, and they at once went down upon their knees to pray for



strength and comfort for that dear little soul, who was already beginning to tread the winepress alone. After they arose, Mildred threw her strong arms around Mrs. Dean's frail body (and she seemed to be growing frailer daily now), and said: "Mama Dean, you have been everything to me since my own dear mama went to sleep, and I want you to know that your counsel and words of wisdom are bearing fruit. I have been thinking seriously lately of making my life's choice, and I find that the young Christian brother who wishes me to share his labors and his love, is ready, willing, and able to kneel and engage with me in earnest prayer upon any occasion that we are thrown together; and it is not often that we pass many moments in each other's society without a season of prayer. I remember the admonition given in one of the good books you placed in my young hands. The writer said, "No Christian girl should think of wedding a man who could not kneel by her side, and pray for her as her father would do." That expression took deep hold upon my mind, and I always intended to put it into effect by way of a test of character. I did so, and found the one to whom it was applied not at all abashed or confused. Nay, in fact, *he* had been wishing for the opportunity to show me how devoid of passion and self was his love. So, dear Christian mother, do not weep such bitter tears; for if your own 'ewe lamb,' as you so lovingly call her, did wed without the fold, you have been instrumental in helping one lonely orphan girl to take her stand where, by the Lord's help, *she* will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. Instead, I hope it may be truthfully said that my delight is in the law of



the Lord, and in his law do I meditate day and night; I owe much to you, Mama Dean." All this was as balm to Mrs. Dean's bleeding heart, and she thanked God, and took courage, as she pressed a good-night kiss on Mildred's brow, and quietly withdrew from the room.

Aunt Prudence and her young friend lingered together a moment to speak in whispers of "the visible failure in Mrs. Dean's strength since Irma went away," and then separated for the night.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

It would bring an ache to the hearts of our readers, and a glow of indignation to their cheeks, to follow the minutia of Irma's life. Many times she left the table without having tasted food, although the board was filled to overflowing of that which was "not bread." Many the times she wept herself to sleep over some stinging fling from Ada's cruel lips, or from being completely ignored by Ralph's mother. The servants were not less cruel, for like mistress, like maid. Old Mrs. Hughs, alone, treated her with the deference and respect which was her due. While she was the child of a king, a princess in disguise, her Father's kingdom was not of this world; so those around her held in contempt her prospective heirship, and bitter were her days and nights now. She saw little of her mother, for Mrs. Dean had never stepped foot within the Hughs' domain; and when Irma went home, it was only to weep out her woe while clasped close in her mother's arms. Ralph made futile efforts to stem the tide, stand by his gentle wife, and see that she did receive that which was her right; but it was useless, and only caused her more pain. She was completely ignored by both Mrs. Hughs and Ada. Many times she was forced to sit through a long course dinner upon the Sabbath. Often the parlors were filled with gay company upon Sabbath evenings, and Ralph always insisted, nay, commanded, that she go down, for he just could not stand his mother's and Ada's stabs about "the old Jewish Sabbath," and other things even more insulting.



It would take an inspired pen to depict Irma's situation. She kept all possible locked within her own breast. Her husband knew not the half to which she was subjected, for she saw that he must eventually come to hate the cause of all this, and, of course, her religious views came in for *all* the blame. Ralph's will triumphed with her in a great measure, but he had never yet dared to ask her to renounce her faith; and although she was forced by stress of circumstances into so much that was sinful, as regards desecrating the Sabbath, and in being compelled to eat food not acceptable to the Lord, she was loyal at heart, and was reaching the point where she would be willing to suffer martyrdom before she would withdraw from her congregation; and who can say she was not *now* beginning to suffer martyrdom, as predicted in the first pages of this work. Her home life in the Hughs family was fast developing a martyr-like spirit. Ralph made bold once to approach his father upon the subject, and wished him to allow them a sum sufficient to set up an establishment of their own. Money was old Mr. Hughs's god, and he did not feel inclined to open his treasure-trove for what he considered a mere whim. He loved Irma in his way, and rather admired her "pluck," as he termed it, about "going to church on Saturday," and "not eating pickled pig's feet if she did not wish to do so." But it was not possible for him in any measure to realize the situation, so he could not bring himself to be willing to set Ralph up in an establishment of his own, when there was so much and to spare in the ancestral home of his forefathers. Some may wonder why Mr. Dean did not come to the rescue. It was simply because he knew nothing of the truth as it was. Irma developed a Spartan-like spirit,



and let these things gnaw her very vitals, and yet presented as calm an exterior as possible. If Mr. Dean *had* known the truth of the whole matter, he would not have been willing to invest his means in an establishment simply to gratify Ralph's desire for the pomp and vanities of this world. Irma had pleaded with her husband to allow her to ask her father for a modest sum, and that Ralph take his inheritance from his grandfather's estate, and set up a home of their own; and she had pictured in bright colors their home life, using every endearing term, and even impassioned pleadings, to induce him to take this step. He sometimes seemed inclined to yield; then the thought of what the "four hundred" would say held him in check. It was true that he had defied them in the choice of a wife, but the headlines of that sensational article published just after his marriage seemed burned on his brain in indelible characters, and he did not intend to give them a chance for another fling at him. So rather than brave receiving the cut direct from some multimillionaire friend, so-called, he preferred to remain in a gilded prison, and keep his young wife there also. If he had been entirely removed from his present surroundings, had his environment been that of Irma's own home, he would have been won to the truth; but as it was, there was nothing to enhance the beauties of Irma's faith, and it seemed to him, as it does to most others who live in divided households, that every unpleasant thing, every painful occurrence, every clash of opinions in the family circle, came about because of Irma's "faith." He was growing to speak quite hard of many things, which in the Dean family he had considered beautiful, and had even championed, when his mother had derided. Irma could



but realize that things were growing from bad to worse. Some days she did not go down at all, but in her own room partook of fruits and such hygienic food as she could buy, only to hear the servants sneer and laugh about such things when clearing up the apartments next morning. Upon one of these occasions Ralph was in the bathroom, and the housemaid, unaware of it, was discoursing to the footman upon Irma's "peculiarities." Ralph, in a perfect blaze of wrath, burst in upon her, and sent her hastily from the room, telling her that his mother should "discharge her without a recommendation;" but he found, upon bringing the affair to his mother's notice, that he had "reckoned without his host;" in other words, his mother was not at all inclined to inconvenience herself to please his "whims." She remarked instead that "it would be much more becoming that his wife preserve at least a show of good form, and not indulge in those rather peculiar practices which were such a revelation to servants in *her* establishment. What could he do? What did he do? He did as many before him have done, and as many after him will do; that is, he turned to wreak his vengeance upon the innocent cause of it all. He rushed to Irma, and poured out a torrent of reproach upon her for having a "sack of Sanitarium crackers and a box of granose biscuit stuck in one place, and a can of nuttolene and a jar of fruit with a spoon and saucer in another, for all the world like the wife of a day laborer doing light housekeeping in two rooms of a city flat." He furthermore said that *his* wife must go to the family board and take her meals as any other well-bred lady would be expected to do. And so ended *that* simple privilege; for from henceforth he brought his will to bear, and saw that Irma went regu-



larly to the dining room. Had it not been for Lela, Irma, the wife of Ralph Hughs, son of the banker, would have suffered from *actual hunger*; for after that scene with Ralph she would have almost perished from hunger ere she would have again taken so much as a sack of fresh fruit to her room.

Time passed, but on leaden wings to Irma. She had absolutely no freedom, and no one cared for her save Ralph and Lela; and, sad to say, Ralph often spent his evenings at the club or opera, and upon such occasions Irma never went down to the parlor at all, but instead spent her evenings in prayer and tears. Her Christian experience had not been deep enough to enable her to rise triumphant above all this, and to grasp God's promises by naked faith. She had expected so much, and had received so little; yet her faith in God did not fail. She knew that she had sinned in the step she had taken, and she felt that all this was but retribution, and she comforted herself with the thought that "all things work together for good to them that love God." She would look up and say, "Lord, I love thee." We will ask the young reader who has been tempted to take the step that Irma took, to try to imagine her feelings at this time. What would she have given to have been free to go her own way, and serve her God as she chose! If she could have engaged actively in missionary work among the poor, her time would not have dragged so heavily. But upon one occasion she attempted this by going, without Ralph's permission, to join her mother in some medical missionary work in the slums. On her return she learned that during her absence one of the "four hundred" had called,—one whom Mrs. Hughs prized very highly,—



and the caller had actually sent up a card for "Mrs. Ralph Hughs;" but she could not be found. Ada suspected where she had gone, and took occasion to speak of the call and Irma's absence in Ralph's presence, and embellished it to suit herself, remarking in conclusion, "If anybody who *is* anybody ever asks for her, she is sure to be out doing missionary work." The result of this was Ralph's interdict as to any more "missionary work," and so the tangled thread of her life became more and more knotted, and her young head more bowed with grief each day she lived. To all our young friends who may be tempted to take the step that Irma did, we would say, "Beware!"



## CHAPTER XXVII.

SOME two years have passed over Irma's head since the events recorded in our last chapter, and she is a prospective mother. Ralph did all possible to cheer her during this trying period, Lela was devoted, Mrs. Hughes remained seemingly blind to the situation, while Ada was openly insulting more than once; yet Irma's uncomplaining nature, and faith in God has upheld her. Her own mother has wept whole nights over the situation, and has been the only real earthly comfort the poor girl has had.

It would be impossible to picture the condition of the domestic affairs in the Hughes household. Ralph was well nigh reckless, almost desperate. Mrs. Hughes and Ada seemed determined to drive him to revolt, hoping thereby to render Irma so extremely unhappy as to force her to flee to her own parents for comfort, knowing full well if such a thing could be brought about, it would lead to an open rupture between the young couple. Mrs. Hughes knew not of the counsel of Irma's godly mother, who told her child to endure almost any indignity before she did "anything to bring reproach upon the cause of Christ." And this brings us to Irma's present condition. At first Ralph was rejoiced, but the order of things in his home brought about a change in his feelings, and while he had tried to cheer Irma, he had been fearfully cast down himself. Such a reserve had sprung up between him and Mr. Dean, that there was no cordial interchange of feeling between them. They seldom met, and then



only upon Sabbath afternoons, when Ralph would sometimes accompany Irma home for a short time. Often Irma's mind reverted to the beautiful picture of the future which she in her girlish days had drawn in her imagination, when Ralph and papa should be like father and son; when they would all sit so cosily together and talk of the sacred affairs of each other's home life. She had never dreamed it possible that the present state of affairs could ever exist, that her father and Ralph could ever be so estranged as they now were. And, oh, to watch the form of her gentle mother becoming more fragile daily, to notice how careful Aunt Prudence and Mr. Dean were of that mother's comfort; to realize that she, her daughter, was the one who should be ever at that mother's side to comfort her, and minister to her every want, but her present condition rendered her unfit for anything except to weep with grief, and despair. Deep, unavailing grief! It began to dawn upon Irma's mind that her mother was going from her, and oh, the terribleness of the thought; that grief over her only child's unhappy condition was the cause of that mother's failing health, seemed more than Irma could bear.

On a certain Sabbath afternoon Irma had induced Ralph to go "home" (as she so pathetically called it) with her. When they entered the house, there was no one present but Mrs. Dean. She was now too feeble to go out twice upon the Sabbath. After warm and loving greetings for them both, the mother took a seat upon a divan, drawing them down one upon either side of her, and clasping a hand of each, she said:—

"My children, let me speak plainly to you. You are neither one happy. Why do you not take your load of care



to the great Burden-bearer? He is able and willing to sustain you. You both made a mistake, and expected too much of human love. You, Ralph, expected that Irma's love for you would cause her to give up much that was sacred and holy to her, while she, poor, deluded child, depended upon your love for her, to enable you to see the beauty in these same things, and to ultimately induce you to espouse them. Now neither of these results has been brought about, and you are a pair of very unhappy children. Shall we pray the Father to help? Let us kneel and invoke a blessing upon you both, and upon the little unborn babe, whose very existence is being affected by the present state of affairs."

Ralph hesitated a moment, but soon sank upon his knees by Mrs. Dean's side. He could hear Irma's sobs between the words of prayer; and such a prayer! He listened with bated breath. The woman seemed inspired. She prayed as he had never heard anyone pray in all his life. As he listened to her, he drew the contrast between this and what was transpiring daily in his own home. He thought, If I had been raised by such a Christian mother as this, I should have been a Christian, too.

Mothers, do you know how widespread and deep your influence is? I fear some do not. O woman, either you have a grand sphere of usefulness, or you become Satan's agent to destroy; there is no middle ground.

Irma could not utter a word of prayer; so, when her mother ceased speaking, they all arose from their knees. Ralph was very much subdued. Mrs. Dean said:—

"Mr. Hughs, I must speak plainly to you. First of all, I am commissioned by Mr. Dean to offer you the hospitality of our home. Come here, and rest your tempest-



tossed heart. Bring Irma home, and let us be one family. Renounce 'the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;' for these things are 'not of the Father, but of the world.' Remember that the 'Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' We are told in Isa. 55: 1, 2, that 'he that hath no money, come, ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.' Now will you not come? first, to your loving Heavenly Father, and find peace to your soul? then come home here to those who love you as their own child. We know of your great pride, and know why you do not have a home of your own. According to the Word of God, we do not believe in putting our money into a gilded establishment of pomp and show, but we will welcome you and Irma, and honor you here in our modest home. I know it will all seem humble when compared to your stylish life; but I am sure we can make you happy."

Irma sat almost breathless in her eagerness, during this earnest appeal from her mother to her husband. O, how the young wife prayed! Ralph was deeply moved, but he did not yield, for pride held him back. He could, in imagination, hear his mother's and Ada's cruel taunts as to his "turning Adventist." He was not brave enough to take the step, although the picture was very inviting, and the Scriptures quoted by Mrs. Dean, in such an impressive manner, seemed to him to have been



written expressly for the occasion; for he did not know such words were in the Bible. He gently thanked Mrs. Dean for her kind offer, but said that "it would not be practicable" for him to take such a step. It seemed to Irma as if her heart would break, but she said not a word.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

As Ralph and Irma walked up to the front door upon their return from Mr. Dean's, the Hughs family were sitting upon the veranda. They heard Ada remark:—

“The Adventists are returning. I wonder they go out at all to-day, except to church, they are such devout *Saturday Christians*.”

They neither one gave any evidence of having heard the remark, but both passed quietly in, and went up to their own room. Irma was facing the fact that she was an unwelcome intruder in this family. Not one besides Lela loved her. Old Mr. Hughs was so immersed in the coining of money that he paid little attention to home affairs. Having compelled his family to attend Ralph's marriage, and on their return from their wedding trip welcomed him and his wife to his home, and afterward being kind and polite to Irma upon the few occasions of coming in contact with her, he felt his duty done. He knew nothing of the seething, bubbling cauldron of domestic heartache and woe beneath his own roof.

A few weeks later Ralph and Irma were visiting at Mr. Dean's, and as they were about to leave for home, Mr. Dean said: “Mr. Hughs, I have a request to make of you; nay, more. I might say, a command to lay upon you: my daughter *must* come home for the next few weeks, at least. She needs a mother's care, and *she must have it*. I simply decline to take ‘No’ for an answer in this matter. I hope your love for her will be sufficient



to enable you to brook the criticisms of your own family. It is evident *they* do not intend to administer to her needs."

"She would be in the hands of a first-class physician and a trained nurse," Ralph replied, with some assumption of dignity."

"That I doubt not, sir," said Mr. Dean; "but she must be in the hands of a *godly* physician and a *Christian* nurse."

Ralph had never before seen the look of quiet determination upon Mr. Dean's face which was now visible there, so he thought it wise not to contest the point. Irma sat weeping by her mother's side, who was wearily reclining upon a sofa. As the daughter arose to go, Mrs. Dean drew her to a resting place upon her own breast, and with a silent prayer said, "Go with your husband, my darling." But it seemed to that fond mother that her heart would burst with agony, as she saw the pleading look in her child's eyes.

As the young couple left the room, Mr. Dean was thoroughly aroused. His was a quiet but an intense nature. He was now angry. It took all the patient sweetness of which his wife was possessed to quell the storm she saw brewing. She knew how fearful it would be for any rashness to be displayed just now. She knew it would only injure the cause of Christ, and result in their becoming stumbling stones. Arising, she went to her husband's side, and placing her gentle hand upon his bowed head, said:—

"My husband, do not permit Satan to use you in this matter. It is a delicate task we have to perform, and many lives have been wrecked at this point through un-



wise management. Remember that we must be 'as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves.' Let us pray."

Mr. Dean fell upon his knees, sobbing like a child. Bitterly, bitterly, did he regret having favored Ralph Hughs's advances in the first place. More bitterly did he regret not having used his parental authority, and prevented the marriage of his loved daughter to an unconverted man. But unavailing were his tears now, so far as Irma was concerned. The step had been taken. The consequences were to be met, and endured by each according to their peculiar temperaments and according to their individual Christian experience. Mrs. Dean's experience was so deep and so rich that even this only caused her to sing,—

"Nearer my God to thee,  
Nearer to thee!  
E'en though it be a cross  
That raiseth me!"

After a season of humble prayer and seeking the Lord, the father arose much strengthened. Mrs. Dean saw that her husband was more himself than he had been for weeks. She rejoiced and forthwith set about to impress him with the idea of letting the Spirit lead, even as to Irma's coming home to them at this critical time.

Ralph Hughs loved his young wife devotedly, yet passionately; that is, one moment she was *all* to him, but the next, some worldly interest, some cutting sarcasm from Ada, or some chance remark from a society friend, would cause him to be harsh and even unkind in his remarks and acts. So Irma was continually in a state of unrest. Ralph was no worse than most persons who are actuated by impulse, rather than by principle founded upon the Rock, Christ Jesus.



A few days after, Mr. Dean spoke to Ralph about Irma's coming home; the young husband resolved to appeal once more to his mother; so, choosing a time which he thought would be propitious, he sought her. She was alone. Ralph sat down on a low rocker almost at her feet, and even attempted to take her soft, jeweled hand in his, saying:—

“Mother, do you not love me any more? Have you no interest in my sweet young wife? no care for her, nor our little unborn babe? Is it possible, with all the wealth and magnificence here, with this staff of servants, with a mother and two sisters, and all that money can buy, that my wife will be obliged to go elsewhere to receive that loving assistance and tender sympathy that woman alone can give to woman in her hour of extremity? Surely not. O, my mother, once more I appeal to the motherhood in you. *Please*, even at this late hour, take my wife to your heart, and make her feel that you, *my mother*, will stand her friend in her hour of need. Surely, I will not have to go elsewhere for the kind offices which my own mother and sisters should perform.”

Mrs. Hughs withdrew her hand from Ralph's clasp, and, drawing herself up, said:—

“Well, what a sensational appeal! I did not know that you were going into private theatricals. I thought your ‘creed’ too straight-laced for that. To be rational, please tell me what you would have me do to further contribute to Mrs. Ralph Hughs's comfort—don a white apron and mob cap, and poise as ‘chief’ in your nursery? If so, I beg to be excused. Such things are not at all according to my taste. And, furthermore, I should not suppose the Deans would be willing that a young ‘Ad-



ventist' should be cradled in the home of a 'Gentile,' any way."

Ralph arose from his seat, and with a look that was simply fearful to behold, said:—

"Mother, I am done. I shall *never* appeal to you again, though I perish for what you could bestow." Nor did he ever again seek to win from his mother anything like tenderness for himself or his wife.

He sought Irma. His heart was like a volcano. The last fling of his mother, as to the young "Adventist," was the straw to break the camel's back. As he entered Irma's apartment, she saw that he was furious. But, strange to say, he did not dare vent his fury upon his mother's implacable head, and being cowardly, as most unconverted men are, he wreaked his vengeance upon his defenceless wife.

"Irma," he began, "all this domestic unhappiness, all this estrangement in my family, springs from your tenacity for a senseless creed. What difference do you suppose it really makes whether one goes to church upon Saturday or Sunday? I just can not bear much more. My mother and sister Ada are so opposed to the Adventist religion that they will never really recognize you as of their set so long as you cling to that fanatical form of worship. Why not give it all up, and be confirmed along with Lela, when the Episcopal bishop next visits this diocese here? Why not?"

He then changed his tactics, and seating himself beside her, drew her gently to him, and in whispered words of love and endearment pleaded with her to "do this for Ralph."

Poor child! Torn by a thousand conflicting emotions,



she grew faint, and would have fallen had her husband not supported her. She soon recovered herself, however, and looking her husband full in the face, and taking up a quaint paper-knife in the form of a stilleto, that lay on the table, she said in an intense, though calm and impressive manner,—

“Ralph, take this, and strike me to the heart with it; but never again speak such words as you have just spoken to me. I can die for my Saviour, but I can not deny him in that way. It has been sad enough here at best, and I have done already too much to wound him as it is; but please, my husband, never again ask me to forsake the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.”

She looked up, and said: “Jesus, I my cross have taken. O, my Saviour, support me, I pray!”

Ralph said no more, for he was awestricken by the look of devotion upon her pale face. It was taking deep trials to perfect her Christian experience; but God's hand was over her. He would only suffer the dross to be burned away. When the Refiner could see his own face reflected in the *pure* metal, then the furnace would be permitted to cool — not before. Girls, beware!



## CHAPTER XXIX.

A FEW days after this conversation between Ralph and Irma, they were again much disturbed, as they discussed some important matter in rather low tones. Ralph said:—

“Irma, if you go, it will be fearful for me, I just can not stay there with you. My family would cast me off entirely; and you know I am not rich in my own right. Do you not think it best for your mother to come and spend some time with you?”

Irma raised herself upright, and said, “My mother come here? Never! What could make you propose such a thing? I would not ask it for the gold of Ophir; nor would my father permit it; though my dear, patient mother would do anything to please us, or to insure my comfort, in spite of my heedlessness and unfaithfulness.” She ended by saying in an undertone, “Mother, O my mother, would to God I was to-day your little care-free girl once more, and you were as strong and well as I would have you be.”

Ralph sat gnawing his mustache in a nervous manner. At last he said: “Well, I see nothing remains but for you to go home. I will spend as much time as possible with you.”

His face flushed crimson as Irma turned her earnest eyes upon him, and said: “So you decide that it is not ‘possible’ for you to remain there with me?”

He replied: “No, indeed. Irma, you know I must keep up appearances. If I drop entirely out of the family



circle here, it will be hard for us ever to enter it again, and I tell you, once for all, I am not prepared to yield my present social position. Now, if you please, no more tears nor hysterics. I do not fancy these scenes at all. I never dreamed before marriage of having to encounter such things. I thought that when we were married, it would be smooth sailing; but it was a sad mistake."

Irma refrained from replying by biting her lips until the blood almost started. She was tempted to draw the contrast between the sweet, seductive picture which had been in her girlish brain, and the stern reality as this decision of her husband brought out the situation of the present moment. Can anyone do justice to the condition of things, in trying to depict this girl's feelings just now? To think of the short time she had been married, and of the indignities she had suffered; of the utter indifference of the entire family,—except Lela,—in this grand house,—it is not a home,—indifference as to whether she lived or died. But, oh, the bitterest drop in the cup was when her husband practically decided to cleave to his "own," and leave her to her fate.

Can anyone imagine her heartache? Yet, she is not alone in this grief. Few young wives are so blessed as to escape every sorrow of this nature. The trial will come sooner or later. But if both parties are anchored in Christ Jesus, Satan may do his worst, and he can not destroy the comfort of domestic bliss. But if the household is "divided," we are told that it can not stand. If the house is built upon the sand instead of the Rock, Christ Jesus, it must fall, and "great will be the fall of it."

Who dare take the step which will establish a "divided household"? Who can so sin against light and knowl-



edge, and expect to escape the consequences, even in this present world? It is simply "cause and effect." Oh, if women whom we know dared speak freely, they would cry out to every girl in the land, Beware! It is not every man who even "names the name of Jesus" that will stand the varied experiences of wedded life. It is our opinion that an exceedingly limited number ever reach the high plane that God intended a Christian husband to occupy. Who is it that can understand the workings of that most sacred of all earthly things, the heart of a true, pure woman, especially if she be a young wife, and a prospective mother? Husbands, the great day alone will reveal to you the grand, sublime privileges you have had, that of cheering, comforting, loving your wife with such a love that the angels in heaven might look on, and say, "Holy." How many of you do love with a "holy" love?

One remark of a sweet young girl wife made a deep impression on us. She said: "I have been such a blessed girl. My husband loves me with such a rich, full love I do not see how I could have been so blessed." After that remark the young husband was elevated and put upon a pedestal, so to speak, in our estimation, and his every act has since been regarded with the greatest degree of interest, almost reverence. We do not think there are many husbands who can be tested by God's plummet, and found "straight," weighed in God's balances, and not "found wanting."

A true woman's part in life is difficult at best. O husbands, wake up to your privileges and duty! Guard as the apple of your eye that woman who has forsaken all for you. A woman's heart will ache, and burn with a secret fire that knows no quenching, if her husband is cold, cruel,



or even indifferent as to her comfort and happiness. One word of love, one tender smile, one rosebud placed gallantly in her hair, or upon her breast, a good-by kiss at the door, will make sunshine and melody in a woman's heart all day; while a forbidding frown, or a morose manner, with a sharp "bang" of the door as the family separate in the morning, will give her the heartache all day, and take from her the very spring and incentive to everything noble, so far as earthly influences are concerned. But, thank God, there is a Heavenly Father who hears every sigh, heals every woe, sees every tear; and we doubt not that many of the tears might be turned to smiles by a loving effort upon the part of the husband. Yet let us all remember, "Earth hath no sorrow that heaven can not heal."



## CHAPTER XXX.

AFTER a few weeks, we find Irma sitting in a low rocker in her own bed-chamber in her father's house. She is crooning a soft lullaby as she clasps a wee, baby girl closely in her arms. She has a far-away, dreamy look, and signs of weeping are visible about her eyes. She is even now struggling for composure, as the father of her babe enters the room. She holds the little dimpled darling up for inspection, and eagerly scans her husband's face as his eyes rest upon their babe, their firstborn, a miniature woman, to share a woman's fate and weep a woman's tears should she live.

All that was noble in Ralph's nature had been stirred since the birth of his child, and he had spent most of the time with Irma, regardless of consequences. But now that the little one was some weeks old, he had been for a few days urging that they return to his father's home. He found the quiet home life of the Dean family monotonous; a longer stay would prove irksome indeed. Irma could not yet consent to go. She remembered the day she left Ralph's home. While life lasts it will linger in her memory. There was a state dinner in the Hughs mansion that same evening, when it was known that Irma was preparing for her temporary absence. And a wave of bitterness swept over the girl at the thought of how Ada tried to induce Ralph to be present at the dinner, even saying by way of inducement, "Miss Golden is in the parlor, resplendent in a new costume fresh from Paris."

All this stood out in bold relief in Irma's mind, as also



the result, the nervous fever which took her very near death's door when her little one came. There had been the hushed whisper, the gentle footfall, the eager manner of intense suspense and apprehension for hours before Irma's babe saw the light.

"Some great mental strain," the physician had said. "There is something here I do not understand. She is young, apparently strong, but there seems a lack of vitality or of will power. It is sad to see a young person so utterly indifferent as to the result."

Mrs. Dean, Aunt Prudence, and Mildred B—— had sought God earnestly and had made intercession day and night for the life of their "lamb." God heard their prayers, and Irma drifted back to life.

It is thus we find her, and it is under these circumstances that her husband is urging, nay, almost commanding her to return with him to her gilded prison. Of course she will go; for her sweet mother is already saying, "Go with your husband, my darling."

She is for the second time, as it seemed to her mother, to be led as a "lamb to the sacrifice." And yet that loving mother dared not put out her hand to stay the sacrificial offering. Her daughter had taken the step that bound her life to the ungodly, and all that the mother could do was to pray without ceasing.

Is she the only mother in the faith to-day weeping, almost refusing to be comforted, because a loved daughter has persisted in wedding as her carnal heart inclined? — We fear not. God pity them both, and pity us all who are not in the place where the loving Father would have us.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

SEVERAL months have passed, and Irma and her babe are at her husband's home. It would be difficult to describe this child, and more difficult to find a fairer, sweeter babe in all the land. Her large expressive brown eyes told of her relationship to Irma, while her tapered, patrician hand and almond shaped nails, showed forth her father's lineage. There was an indescribable something about her hard to fathom, at even this early age. A grave preoccupied air, a look of patient sadness about the rosebud of a mouth, a grieved quivering of the lip when a harsh tone fell upon her ear, a startled look when anyone entered the room hurriedly,—all this betokened her extreme nervous sensibility, and was the result of prenatal influences. We wonder if it ever entered into the mind of her grandmother Hughs how great a part she had played in entailing so much woe upon this innocent child.

Ralph had insisted upon calling the little one Maggie, in memory of his own little sister, whom he had loved so fondly. While Irma would have much preferred a name chosen from among those grand characters in God's Word, she as usual yielded to Ralph's wish. One sweet thought for Irma connected with the child's name, was that her own dear mother bore the same; yet the young mother's first choice had been from Holy Writ.

To say that Irma idolized her child is quite true. Ralph had suggested that she give it into the hands of another to nourish, but she had pleaded to be allowed that



privilege herself. So the little one grew and thrived under the devoted care lavished upon it by the mother. Lela also gave many hours to little Maggie. Irma so much wished to choose from among those of "like precious faith" a little maid to tend her baby, but this was denied her; however, she succeeded in getting a girl far above the average nurse of to-day, and as her own eye was seldom removed from her precious charge, there was little to fear.

Mr. Hughs fondled and loved the babe whenever he saw it, and would sometimes repeat the name "Maggie, little Maggie," over and over, as if he, too, loved the very sound of the words. Doubtless his own memory went back to the little flower-like face he had laid away to sleep until the resurrection morn. Mrs. Hughs never deigned to notice either child or mother when she could possibly avoid doing so. Ada always made some fling about the "young Adventist," or about the "bread-and-water baby," whenever she came near the child or mother.

Yet Irma was content, for did she not have her babe to love, to cherish, to train, to provide for, to nourish, in fact, to live for, and, if need be, to die for? The happiest moments of her life were when Ralph would accompany her and "our daughter," as they sometimes called the little treasure, to see "Grandma Dean." One such afternoon would give her strength to endure weeks of stabbing and nagging in her "golden cage," as she had come to call her place of abode.

Although Ada usually took no notice of the child, except to sneer, as time passed, the exquisite loveliness of the little girl became so apparent, that she began to see



in the child's beauty, something with which to create a sensation, and at the same time stab the mother to the very heart. And being like the Athenians, who "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing" (Acts 17:21), Ada at once began to plan her scheme of creating a sensation in her "set."



## CHAPTER XXXII.

ONE afternoon, as Ralph sat all alone, Ada thought the time had come to carry out her plans. So, approaching her brother, she said: "I suppose the Adventists are opposed to your little girl's being christened, and of course you are tame enough to submit. Why not exercise your authority in your own family, and at the bishop's next visit, when Lela is to be confirmed, have your beautiful little babe christened? It has been years since anything so interesting as that occasion could be made, has occurred in our church. I claim the privilege of choosing the godmother, who shall be my special friend, Miss Golden. She is rich, and would be suitable, and so glad to stand. But I do not suppose that you will be permitted to carry out my plan."

Ralph was, of course, stung by Ada's intimation that he dared not exercise his manly (?) prerogative, and "do as he pleased;" and this was just the result that Ada wished. She knew the nature with which she had to deal. And, knowing that he had always made his will "law" when dealing with those who could not help themselves she was very hopeful as to the result of having "pressed the button, and set the machinery in motion," as she expressed herself in speaking to her equally heartless mother. Was she disappointed? We shall see.

A few weeks before the bishop was to arrive, Ralph sought Irma as she sat in the nursery one evening, soothing her babe to sleep. Taking a seat by her side, and gently caressing both mother and child, he said: —



"I suppose you are aware, Irma, that the bishop of our church will soon visit this congregation. You also know that Lela is to be confirmed at that time. It is my desire, that we have Maggie christened upon the same occasion. The double service of the confirmation of the youthful aunt and the christening of the infant niece, will be interesting, indeed, and will give much pleasure in our social 'set.'"

He must surely have forgotten how he once sneered at the "fads" of that same "social set," but that was before Irma was fully in the toils. Irma started, and pressed her babe to her bosom. Had she been stung by a serpent, the pain would not have been so intolerable. What should she do? What could she do? She saw upon her husband's face the look of determination to which she had become accustomed; and realizing how utterly futile were her efforts to alter his determined purpose, she said nothing, but sat with throbbing brain and rapidly beating heart. The time had been when ready tears would have sprung to her relief; but now she seemed almost turned to stone, by the things that crossed her pathway. They were sitting in the gloaming, so Ralph could not see Irma's face; and as she made no reply, he was deceived into thinking that she was consenting to his request. He therefore continued:—

"Ada and my mother will attend to the details of the whole affair; such as choosing the godmother, preparing the robe, issuing the invitations to those who will dine with us after the church service; selecting the presents; and in fact, they will relieve you of any trouble. All you will have to do, is to look your sweetest, dress your best, and just be the baby's mama."



At this juncture Irma spoke, and Ralph was frightened at the intensity in her voice. She said:—

“In other words, just submit myself as a galley slave to your behests, and suffer the grandest, purest, most sublime thing in a true woman's life,—the privilege of true motherhood,—to be trampled in the mire of sin, simply to create a sensation in your social world. Let me inform you, Mr. Hughs, you have gone a step too far. *My* babe can never be christened by an Episcopal bishop.”

He replied in a voice just as constrained as Irma's: “Allow me to assure you, Mrs. Hughs, that *my* little daughter will at the set time go through that beautiful service in the Episcopal church.”

With these words he quitted the room.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

REALIZING that sleep would be impossible, and as it was just dark, the poor girl resolved to seek her only earthly "haven of rest," a mother's arms. Her first impulse was to take her babe, and flee out into the night, and never return; never let anyone know her whereabouts; never again darken the portals of this house, where such refined cruelty was daily practiced. But after a few moments' reflection, she saw that such a course would be sinful, and fearing the consequences upon her frail mother, she smothered her indignation as best she could, and, going in where her maid sat, requested her to prepare to accompany her. Taking the little nurse girl to the bedside where her little Maggie slept, she told the girl to lie down beside the babe, and not to leave the place until the mother returned. Then hurriedly dressing herself for the street, she took her trusty maid and set out. They took the car to that portion of the city where Mr. Dean resided. Upon leaving the car, Irma gave her maid permission to spend an hour with a friend near, bidding her to call at the expiration of the hour. Irma then hastened to her mother.

The young wife was loath to speak of those things which that prudent godly mother had taught her to "keep sacred," but this could not be borne without mother. So throwing herself upon her knees by that mother's side, she told it all, and ended by saying:—

"Mama, before I will submit to this, I will take my baby and come home. You will permit me to come, mama, will you not? please say, yes."



Mr. Dean answered by saying. "Of course, you will come, and at once. This is the straw to break the camel's back."

Mrs. Dean motioned for silence, and reaching for her Bible, opened it, and read, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." She then said:—

"No, my darling, I love you too well to permit you to come home, though my heart aches to agony over your sad position. My little 'lamb,' would God that I could buy your happiness with my own heart's blood; I would give it drop by drop. But your precious Saviour has already shed his blood to meet just such emergencies as this. The Lord is sufficient for all things. We will take our trouble to him in prayer. That your position is sad, my child, is plain enough; but not sadder than others of whom I know. A friend in speaking of the heartache and woe of a favorite sister of hers, who had wed among the ungodly, said, 'We can no more reach her case to help her than one could reach an infant seized by an eagle, and borne to the dizzy heights of some inaccessible precipice.'"

And this was Irma's position. Had her parents so much as lifted a finger, or spoken a word in her behalf, it would have only added to her already intolerable weight of woe, and also have injured the cause of Christ. Such suffering one must, indeed, "tread the wine press alone," so far as human aid is concerned. But praise the Lord, no one can shut us off from the mercy seat. Oh it is sweet to know that mercy is free, mercy is free.

After a season of prayer, both Mr. Dean and Irma grew calmer. As they heard the maid's step upon the gravel, Mrs. Dean folded her daughter in her arms,



kissed her fondly, and said, "Go to your husband, my darling." Mr. Dean drew her arm beneath his own, and conducted her to a closed carriage in waiting, which he had summoned by telephone. Placing the maid by her side, he kissed his child, closed the door, and left her to the care of her Heavenly Father,—that Father who has said that a sparrow can not fall without his notice; that Father who numbers the very hairs of our head. We know he pitied this haunted, dazed, undone young wife, as she returned to her home of suffering.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

IRMA could do nothing but submit.

The time soon came for her to endure the bitterest trial of her life. She sat by helpless as the elaborate christening robe was brought in and inspected, and approved. It had been "made to order," and was elegant indeed. The "godmother" sent in her offering, an exquisite gold necklace and pendants. Ralph declared that Maggie should wear this ornament. He had rebelled when Irma refused the traditional ring, and had always protested against her wearing her elegant gold watch concealed and without a chain. Although unable to move his wife upon these points, he was determined to have his daughter dressed as a child in his social circle should be. He could not be turned from his purpose, even by Irma's pleadings, not to be forced to place those golden ornaments upon her innocent babe.

Irma was so grieved that she made no effort to attend worship the Sabbath before her child was to be christened on Sunday. The day dawned beautiful and bright. Ada was all in a flutter of excitement. Lela was more sorry for Irma than she could have expressed, but was not brave enough to say much. It is sad for such natures to be so situated, and their environment to be such as was hers. She could have been trained into a noble, Christian woman. Alas! what is to be her destiny? "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity, saith the preacher." O mother, what is your reaping to be?

Ralph gave his sister Ada full control as to detail.



So she actually visited the nursery, and directed as to the making of the child's toilet. The beautiful babe was soon aware of the strange element in the room, and would turn her pleading eyes to her mother's face, and hold out imploring little arms, when Irma would press the child to her bursting heart, and then set down with the injunction, "Be quiet, mama loves Maggie; but let them dress you this time, darling." She then submitted to be dressed in the robe from "vanity fair," and even laughed aloud as the glittering bauble was clasped around her neck. Could Irma have only known it, she was but going through an ordeal similar to her mother's upon the evening that Mrs. Dean saw her own child robed for the altar. When Maggie's toilet was complete, Ada offered to take the little picture of loveliness in her arms, but the child refused to allow her aunt to even touch her. Ada used every inducement to win the little one to her side, but in vain. The aunt then ordered the little nurse girl to "take the child to the carriage." But still she refused to go, and with trembling lips and tearful eyes, held out her little hands to her mother. Irma had up to this moment steadfastly refused to be present at the christening, or at the dinner to follow. She had told her husband:—

"You can just simply make any excuse you please; but I shall not look upon anything so utterly contrary to the teaching of God's Word."

But when she saw that they would actually have to tear her precious child from its mother's breast, and unwind the little clinging arms from her neck; when she realized what it would mean to that cherished babe who had been held more sacred than words could express,



to be forced to go with strangers, and be separated from her mother for the first time in life, all the motherhood in that noble heart came to the front, and she arose, saying:—

“Let my child alone; give me a half-hour, and I will join you in the parlor, bringing Maggie with me.”

Ada bowed and withdrew. Irma dressed hurriedly, but as usual looked exceedingly lovely as she entered the parlor, followed by the nurse holding Maggie carefully in her arms. Miss Golden was present to go with the family. She offered to caress the babe, but her advances were no more welcome to the innocent little one than had Ada's been. As Irma entered, Ralph looked the surprise he did not speak, and rejoiced to think that anything whatever could have induced her to go to the church, just for the sake of appearances.

It is not necessary to describe the confirmation service, most people are familiar with it. Lela looked winning in her veil and wreath, and had quite an expression of devotion upon her face when the address was delivered. After that, came the christening. Maggie being the only babe present for that purpose, it was soon over. Her father held her. Irma would or could not; but in whispered words of entreaty, had implored the little darling to “go to papa for just a few moments,” but those large, pensive eyes continually sought the mother's face, and the little quivering lips showed how near the child was to crying. But one encouraging smile from mama seemed to calm her, though her eyes looked like flowers bathed in dew, so close were the tears to the surface. Ada was not at all disappointed as to the effect upon “our set.” Many of their friends crowded around



the family group to fondle and admire the beautiful little girl, who had so meekly submitted to the trying ordeal through which she had been called to pass. Yet it was rather a quiet, constrained party which entered the carriage to return home. No one, not even Ralph, had the cruelty to insist upon Irma's appearing at dinner. For she truthfully pleaded fatigue; and the most unfeeling could read the weariness and heart-ache in her every movement, and as she ascended the stairs with her child clasped closely in her arms, there was a sense of relief in every heart. And what did Ralph do? Follow his wife to comfort, and encourage her?—Not he. Instead, we find him in the parlor enjoying Miss Golden's society, and taking her in to dinner; while Irma sits soothing her excited babe, and weeps alone.



## CHAPTER XXXV.

AFTER a lapse of four years, we will take up our characters again. We will leave to the reader's imagination what Irma Hughs's life has been since we last saw her. We will enter the dining room while dinner is being served. We find the little Maggie of yore, a lovely child of some five summers, dressed in the prevailing mode. She is just as beautiful as she gave promise of being, when a babe, and just as interesting; nor has she lost that pensive, almost haunted look.

At table she sat between her parents, but it was to her mother that she instinctively leaned, and to whom she looked as each course of food is served. She watched closely, and ate or rejected as did her mother. Ice cream and rich layer cake finished the dinner. Irma gently refused both, and motioned her hand to the servant to pass by Maggie also. But it pleased Ada to interfere by remarking, sneeringly:—

“Ralph, you are permitting that child to be denied the simple pleasures of everyday life. Do you not see how longingly she looks at that cream and cake? I think she is enough like a Jewess now. I would let her eat some things in which ordinary mortals indulge.”

Ralph made no reply but reached over and helped the child to a large portion of both cake and cream, and commanded her to “eat it.” Irma shrank as if she had received a blow; but God sustained her. She said nothing, but prayed very earnestly. The little girl's eyes sought her mother's face; but she could not read what



was written there, and in her perplexity she turned from one parent to the other, not knowing what to do. Her mother had always taught her by both precept and practice not to eat such rich food.

It is fearful to think that one or the other parent must openly triumph before the servants and the entire family. It is more fearful to think of the possible consequences of this act upon the spiritual and physical welfare of this dear little girl. We would like to know how many mothers in this beautiful truth can sympathize with Irma, from having passed through a like trial? More than one we doubt not. Irma silently prayed for the Spirit to lead her child, and her prayer was heard; for after the little girl had taken the spoon in her hand to partake of the cream, she laid it down, and said, "Maggie will not eat it; mama does not eat it." Ralph flushed, and the "I-told-you-so" expression on Ada's face was about to urge him on to try to compel the child to eat the food, when his father interposed, and said:—

"Let that child alone. You torment the life almost out of her between your conflicting creeds and notions. If she does not wish the food, let her alone, I say."

Oh the grateful glance that Irma gave the child's grandfather! She felt that she could have fallen upon her knees right there to "praise the Lord for his wonderful goodness to the children of men."

The matter rested there for the present. But Irma's seeming triumph raised such a spirit of evil in Ada's heart that she then and there resolved that for the future she would see that Irma did not have it all *her* way in this thing. It seemed as if it really gave Ada the greatest pleasure she knew to thwart her brother's wife whenever



and however possible, all because of Irma's religious views. As the time passed, Irma realized that Ada had determined to do all possible to weaken the mother's influence over Maggie. And how that mother prayed!

Why was it that this family could not be united in the effort to train up this lovely child in the way she should go? — Simply because light and darkness can not dwell together. Simply because the ideal of those concerned were as different as light and darkness.

From the time that Ada influenced her brother to have the child christened, the aunt had used Maggie's exquisite loveliness whenever a sensation could be created by exhibiting the child. Often the mother's heart had ached when she had been compelled by her husband to allow her baby to be taken down late in the evening to be "presented" to a bevy of godless young people, or to be present for dessert at the close of a state dinner. But as she had taught the little one always to choose fruit for dessert, there had been less harm from her being present on such occasions than had at first seemed possible.

The mother had nourished her at her own breast as long as it was possible, and then had the child take her meals in the nursery for another year. Up to this time she had managed to please the Lord, and at the same time not arouse such bitter antagonism from the family as was now manifested. Long and earnestly did she talk to her little girl, telling her why it was wrong to use certain articles of diet, and so comprehensive was the child's mind that she readily grasped these things, and was quick to discern between the evil and the good.

After the day of Ada's open interference at the table. Irma was always on the alert as they approached the din-



ing room; and she and Maggie never left their rooms without kneeling to pray God to protect. Often Irma had cause to plead in her child's behalf the promise, "If you drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt you;" for of late she had sat by in silence, and seen the foaming champagne glass pressed to those pure little lips and by a father's hand. At such times one line from that grand little poem, "Beautiful Snow," would ring like a refrain in Irma's ears. It was this: "Merciful God, have I fallen so low?" for it seemed to her that she had fallen into an abyss from which there was no deliverance.

Mrs. Dean was still living, but so frail that Irma never mentioned anything which would disturb her mother. So it was only dear, faithful Aunt Prudence or Mildred B — who ever received her confidence at this time; and it was not often that she burdened them with her woes. Whenever she was permitted to take her child to see Mrs. Dean, Maggie was dressed in the plainest garments in her wardrobe, and was cautioned to be bright and loving, and to say nothing to distress Grandma Dean. Of course the little girl of five years could not understand the whys and wherefores of this, but she did know that mama looked approval whenever the conversation could be kept upon such subjects as Maggie's dolls, or the Shetland ponies and basket phaeton lately added to the Hughs stables. Mrs Dean's mind was just as strong as ever, and she would just as willingly have helped Irma bear her burdens as in the days of the girl's early married life, but Irma had resolved that never again would she impose one thing "grevious to be borne," upon that gentle mother, who had been gradually fading away ever since



she had been called upon to yield up her one treasure into the hands of a man who proved unworthy.

One Sabbath afternoon Irma took Maggie, and went to see her mother. They walked the entire distance, and why? — Because Irma never dared to order the carriage to go to this portion of the city, and she did not care to go on the car because of the “jam” on Sabbath afternoons. As they neared the Hughs place she felt fatigued and sad, oh, so sad! and Maggie was quite weary, as was evident from her lagging step. Suddenly the elegant turnout from the Hughs stable dashed by, and who should have the seat of honor but Miss Golden? while Ralph Hughs sat by her side, and Ada and Lela occupied the other seat. They passed so close to Irma and Maggie that the child exclaimed, “Papa, here we are!” But they were gone like a flash, leaving a cloud of dust behind them, and Irma and her child walked on. As they entered the gate, Maggie felt something warm fall upon her hand, which was held closely clasped in that of her mother’s. Looking in her mother’s face, the child saw tears trickling down, and knew that which had fallen on her hand was a tear from her mother’s eye. They were hot, bitter tears; no soothing refreshing shower, to relieve an overwrought brain, but tears that scorched and blistered as they fell. Who has not shed such at some period of life?



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

It is useless to follow Irma step by step as she travels her thorny path alone. Her child did not develop that robust health which the young mother had hoped and prayed for, instead she was unmistakably "nervous." She was precocious and learned, seemingly without effort. Irma was careful not to mention anything about further instruction for the little girl, knowing that should Ada be seized with the idea of sending Maggie to school, there would be no appeal, and that the child would be hurried off to the kindergarten taught by "The Sisters," the only one in the city. Irma had never once been permitted to take her child to Sabbath school, nor did she now attend. She managed to secure, through Mildred B——, a set of the kindergarten material, and many peaceful if not happy Sabbath mornings she spent instructing her little girl, whose bright mind responded so readily to every effort. How the mother craved to be permitted to take her child among those of "like precious faith," but this boon was denied her.

But very few of Irma's friends had ever seen Maggie; for Ralph was growing to hate anything pertaining to the Adventist faith or practice. Irma meekly submitted to stay at home. But she stood firm upon one point. She would no more go down upon Sabbath evenings, nor sit through the long dinners upon the Sabbath day. Ralph would sometimes forbid Maggie's dinner to be sent up, thinking to coerce Irma into coming down, but God gave her courage to remain steadfast.



And this was the life to which Ralph Hughs had brought Irma Dean, the girl he had flattered and won, more by influence than by word. But poor, weak soul: he is more to be pitied than blamed. He had no idea of what would be required of him, did he prove true to his wife. He did not once think it possible that he would have to give up any pleasure, forego any established custom, or in any way "deny himself daily." And when it first was made plain that his pleasure-loving life would have to be revolutionized to keep pace with Irma's onward march, he was not equal to the occasion. "Weighed in the balances, and found wanting" was written over against his name. Is he the only one? — Alas! not by many. If he could have affiliated with the people of God, and not have been called upon to make any sacrifice as to "this present world," he would gladly have done so. But he married with the determined resolution to bring his "will to bear" in inducing Irma to "give up much that was peculiar in her faith." How well he succeeded, his own heart could tell him.



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

As time passed, Irma began to see that the "bonds of wedlock" were becoming very galling indeed to Ralph. Many were the evenings in which he joined a "box party" for the theater, or engaged in some other amusement of like character. And Ada never failed to make it known to Irma that "Ralph and Miss Golden enjoyed the evening immensely." It was not often now that the husband and wife went out together, and when they did, there was no real pleasure on either side. Irma was beginning to see that a crisis must come soon. She did not know what turn events would take, but she knew that the tension was too great, and that something in the domestic machinery must break. And she more than suspected that it would be a human heart.

Several times lately Ralph had given Ada permission to dress Maggie, and take her down town evenings. The little one would come back with her baby hands full of beautiful baubles, things to please the eye, but never a thing that savored of life. Irma bore this as best she could. If she had told the child once not to go, it would have been impossible for Ada to have taken the little one, unless force had been resorted to. But Ralph was always careful to call the child to him, and give the command, "Go tell nurse to dress you, then join Aunt Ada in the parlor, and go out with her." So the mother could say nothing, unless she taught her child to openly disobey her father.

More than one of our number can enter into this



mother's feelings. How careful we should be, young readers, when we begin to plan the building of that sacred structure, a home! Home is not home unless hearts, as well as hands, are united, and both are striving to keep the commandments of God, and thereby become fitted to train up the children of that home in the way they should go, that when they are old, they will not depart from it.

Ada kept encroaching upon Irma in regard to Maggie, but Irma continued to bear and forbear, praying God to keep the child sinless and pure, to help her not to be of the world though she was in the world. At last the limit was reached. Irma had several times hushed her child from trying to tell what Aunt Ada said about "the Deans" and their "cranky ways." She had more than once told Maggie not to repeat such things; but to pray for Aunt Ada. And the mother had hoped that she would be enabled to bear and forbear even unto the end. But there came a time when she had to decide for Maggie, or at least, try to save her.

One Sabbath afternoon the little girl rushed in to be dressed quick, *quick*, to "go to the matinée with Aunt Ada." "Papa said so, nurse, so dress me, *quick*." Irma arose from her seat, determined to interfere, and not allow the child to go. It was the first time Ada had attempted to take the child out upon the Sabbath, and of all places to a matinée. Irma did not see how she could permit this. She sent the nurse to request Mr. Hughs to please come up to the nursery a moment. The girl returned with the information that he was engaged, and that he wished Miss Maggie to be down quite soon, as they were waiting for her. And the girl added, "Miss Golden is there, too." Irma said no more; but allowed



the child to be dressed in a most becoming manner, saw her well wrapped, kissed her good-by, and then sent her down. The weather was quite bleak and damp, entirely too cold for this frail child to have been taken out upon any occasion, much less to sit in a state of excitement in an opera house, and then come out in the cold evening air. As the party left the parlor, Irma stepped out where she could see them enter the carriage. She saw Ralph hand Miss Golden in, and place Maggie by her side. As the mother entered her room, she dismissed the nurse, and sank upon her knees by her bedside, crying, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" She was so utterly undone that she could voice no other words. But she tried to pray. She became more composed, and arising from her knees, she began hurriedly to fill a small hand-bag with a few garments of Maggie's plainest clothing, both her own and her child's Bibles, a few pictures, and some little trifles of which the little one was very fond. Then she dressed herself for the street, and throwing herself across the foot of her bed, awaited the return of the child.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IRMA had determined that as soon as Maggie was restored to her arms, she would take the child, and go immediately to Mr. Dean's. But it was quite late when the party returned; for they had ordered dinner down town, and Maggie told her mother that papa made her "drink some of that 'foam' again." If Irma had needed anything to make her more determined, this remark of her innocent child was the thing. But for that child's sake she must not take the step that night. The little one was chilled and excited, and a bright spot burned upon either cheek. The mother tried to still the precious little tongue from babbling of what had been seen, but it was hard to do. Over and over again would the little creature tell of the glare and tinsel and of the "ladies with not many clothes on," etc., until it seemed to Irma that her head would actually burst with physical pain, and her heart faint with anguish unspeakable, to think that thus early, her innocent babe had been exposed to such a malarious moral atmosphere. At last, by gentle strokes and loving little pats, she soothed and quieted her child, and the little one fell asleep.

Long and earnestly did Irma pray as she sat looking upon that frail little creature. Never before did the young mother realize how very responsible she was for the welfare of this little mite of humanity. Never before did she realize how fearful a thing it was to mar in the beginning anything so pure and innocent as a human being, such as this one. She grew more firm each



moment in her resolve to make the attempt to snatch her child "as a brand from the burning," and leave the result with God. No sleep came to this woman's eyes that night.

Girls, what of her vigil, do you think? Do you suppose that ever once in those sweet, dreamy days of first love, that this girl, peerless and pure, thought it possible for such a fate as this to overtake her?—"No," you say, "a thousand times, no." She is not the only one who has seen their house go down under the storm of domestic strife,—all because it was founded upon the sand, and not upon the "Rock."

At an early hour, before anyone was astir in this great house, Irma awakened her child, hurriedly dressed her, and kneeling with the little one, prayed with all the fervency of her nature; prayed for each member of this godless family; prayed God to forgive her, if the step she was taking was wrong; prayed that the shock might not prove fatal to her own dear, frail mother. And at last she besought the loving heavenly Father to have mercy upon herself, the poor undone wife, who for her child's sake was daring to take this forbidden step. She dared not to think what the consequences might be. She would not let herself reflect upon Ralph's legal right to wrest this child entirely from its mother's arms. She only knew in this case woman's extremity would be God's opportunity; and she could not think farther. She was intending to do her best to save the child, and trust God for the consequences.

Irma really wished to kiss Lela good-by, and once more to look into the kindly eyes of Mr. Hughs; but



she dared not. She and Maggie paused outside Lela's bedchamber door, and as Irma passed on she threw a kiss, and Maggie did the same. Thus Irma Dean Hughs passed down and out of the Hughs' mansion forever.

Merciful heavenly Father, bind up this broken heart. Help her to realize that thou art "a very present help in time of trouble;" for well she knows that "vain is the help of man."

As Irma gained the street, the "work-a-day world" was just beginning to stir itself; the fashionable world was just sinking to rest. She soon called a carriage, and placing her child within, took a seat beside her, at the same time giving the driver the necessary directions. As the door closed upon her, she sank back almost fainting; but Maggie's startled look recalled the mother to herself.

The child said, "Mama we are going so early to grandma's, they will be asleep when we get there; and what will my own papa think when we are not in our places for breakfast?" Irma answered, "Hush, darling; hush, please. No questions now, mama just can not talk." The sweet little lips took on their grieved quiver, but not another word escaped them. The little one sat and held her mother's hand in a loving clasp, not once disturbing that mother by word or motion.

When Irma reached her old home, she paid the driver, and dismissed the hack before ringing the bell. The servant who answered, looked the surprise she did not speak, as she saw Irma and her child standing upon the porch at such an early hour. The girl was a new one, and did not even know who Irma was, but invited her to enter. Irma entered, and waving the girl aside,



went immediately up stairs and into her own room, giving the simple explanation, "I am Mrs. Dean's daughter, do not disturb her. I will meet them at breakfast." The girl thought that the lady had come from a distance, and wished to rest, so she withdrew.

As Irma found herself once more in this chamber of hers, she at once approached the mirror, and looking at her reflected face, exclaimed, "Would to God I had been dressed that evening for my burial, rather than my bridal! but it is done. I must meet the present as best I can. Father, help me."

She sought her father as soon as she heard him descend the stairs; and leading the way to the library, she closed and locked the door, turned and faced the father, and holding her little Maggie close to her side, said with faltering tones:—

"Papa, I have come home to stay. O papa, I could not bear the pressure any longer. Do you think Ralph will try to take my little darling away from me? Do not let him, papa, or I shall surely die."

Mr. Dean read the story at a glance, and his resolve was taken. He would protect his daughter, and help her retain her child if such a thing was possible. But he saw, too, how powerful the other faction would be, and it was with a shrinking heart that he strove to comfort Irma. He told her to rest, and that he, in as cautious a manner as possible, would inform Mrs. Dean. Irma and Maggie were to come in to breakfast, as if this were an ordinary visit, that gossip among the servants might be avoided. He left her to seek Mrs. Dean, and she returned to her room. She soon received a summons to come to her mother, and in a few moments



she and Maggie were clasped close in those loving arms.

When they began to discuss the possibility of Ralph's trying at once to regain the child, Mrs. Dean said:—

“God alone can prevent that. He alone can so manage it as to stay such a proceeding. Let us now go down on our knees, and petition to this effect.”

And it was a sight to make angels weep, to see those broken-hearted ones pleading to be permitted to retain this “other little ewe lamb,” as Mrs. Dean styled her.



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHEN Ralph appeared in the breakfast room next morning, he at once noticed that Irma's and Maggie's places were vacant. He waited a short while, and feeling anxious over Maggie's having been exposed in the chilly air the night before, he called a servant to him, and bade her go inquire how Miss Maggie was feeling that morning. The girl soon returned with the information "that neither Miss Maggie nor her mother were in their rooms."

Ralph pushed back his chair and abruptly quitted the table. Ada desired to follow, but not wishing the servants to talk, she controlled her impulse, and sat still.

Ralph entered his wife's private apartment with some hesitancy; for, sad to say, it was not often of late that his feet had crossed this threshold. He glanced hurriedly around the luxurious apartment, and his heart sank with the foreboding of coming evil. Yet he knew not why. But he did know how ignoble was the part he had been acting lately. His eyes at last rested upon an envelope lying up on the table. He picked it up. It was sealed and addressed to himself. Before breaking the seal he glanced around hurriedly to see if he was alone. He was, for Irma had dismissed both her maid and nurse the previous evening.

After she had resolved to leave the Hughs home, she had called those trusty servants to her, and telling them that she intended making radical changes in her



domestic affairs, and she would no longer need their services. She told them that as it was sudden, she could not give them the customary warning, but instead she would pay them for the entire quarter, hoping that this would suffice for the lack of notice. They loved her, and accepted her proposition. She requested them to leave her alone for the night, and to return any time the next day for their belongings. They consented to do this; so Ralph found himself entirely alone in these rooms, where some eight years previously he had brought his fair young bride, and now what did this silence and gloom mean? His conscience condemned him at once, and he felt so apprehensive of the truth that he feared to open the note he held. He again looked at it, and at once recognized his wife's characteristic writing. Seating himself, he broke the seal, and saw a sheet all blotted with tears, and this is what he read:—

“ My husband, this last time I call you such; for I fear you will not longer allow me that sweet privilege, after you know the step I have taken. I am gone, gone to my parents. Oh Ralph, it is for my innocent little girl that I take this desperate step. You know *our* ideas of parental responsibility. You refused me when, not long ago, I, on bended knees, pleaded as for my life that we leave your father's house, go to a simple home of our own, remove Maggie from the demoralizing influences which were being brought to bear upon her, and from the unkind efforts which were being made to weaken my influence over her. You said, ‘I shall do nothing of the kind.’ You further said, ‘I consider my sisters and their friend, Maggie's godmother, Miss Golden, fitted to train and instruct my child, even if her maternal grand-



parents are Seventh-day Adventists.' I said not another word.

"I did not intend to take *this* step until last night. But when you yesterday, upon the Holy Sabbath day, allowed others to actually force my child from my arms, and take her out to a *matinée*, keeping her until after a late dinner, at which the wine cup was pressed to her sweet baby lips, I then decided to remove her from your home. I really made the decision when you placed her in the carriage by Miss Golden's side, and seated yourself with them, practically making your choice between your wife and your friend. I was confirmed in my determination when Maggie returned chilly, excited, unnaturally bright, and with the taint of wine upon her baby breath. Now I leave my case in God's hands. He is my counselor and defense, a refuge, a strong tower from the enemy, "A very present help in time of trouble."

"Of course, I know you will see papa. I know just what Ada and your mother will say. I also know that for eight long years they have striven to bring about this, unhappy result. They have at last succeeded. May my Heavenly Father be merciful to them; for they know not what they do. If they ever come to sue for mercy, may they obtain it, I pray. Good-by! O Ralph, won't you, even yet, seek the sure haven of rest, even a Saviour's precious wounded side? Do, my husband, do!

"Think as kindly as possible of her, who loved not wisely, but too well.

"Irma Dean Hughs."

Ralph's better nature tried to gain the ascendancy as he read this sheet all blotted with his wife's tears. There had been a time just previous to his marriage and one



afterward, when his child was born, that this man had been very near the kingdom. But he had seen the light, and rejected it, with the inevitable consequences, — for several years past his heart had been growing as hard as a nether millstone toward God and his gentle wife. He had become more than ever tenacious in his whims as to what was right and proper in his “set.” He was now a stickler for the very things that he had once condemned. And when speaking with his mother and sisters, he insisted upon his little girl’s being fully “initiated into the mysteries of polite (?) society.” And this is how Irma’s bright dream ended, as to Ralph’s conversion.

But even now, if left to himself and his God, he would make a fight for the right. But what is to be the result when Ada’s cutting sarcasm is brought to bear?



## CHAPTER XL.

RALPH controlled himself as best he could, and returned to the breakfast table, and by making a pretense at eating, lingered until the family was ready to leave the room. He at once requested his mother and sisters to meet him in a private place; this they did. He read to them Irma's letter, and at its close sat silent. Ada said: —

“Of course, you will now go over with every apology, and on bended knees do the heart-broken act, and win her forgiveness; there will be a grand reconciliation, and the Dean's will have won the day, will have gained the victory, and will have you in leading-strings at last. After all these years of independence I congratulate you, brother mine, over your prospect of milk-and-water domestic bliss. I hereby wash my hands of the whole affair. And how the society papers will take it up! should it leak out, which it will, never fear. And Miss Golden will smile over your abject humbleness. Yours will surely be a life of ‘Darby and Joan’ from this time on; that is, if you seek a reconciliation. Otherwise I see a bright picture for your future. A hasty trip to Europe on business for the bank; an extended visit abroad, with mamma and your sisters accompanied by Miss Golden to join you after a few months; and what is to yet prevent you from shining in your own sphere as you should have done years ago?”

Ralph said, “You surely forget my child, my beautiful little girl. Do you think I shall tamely submit to



her thus being taken from me? I am human, I love the child."

Ada replied, "Maybe I would allow a child of five years to come between *me* and my prospects for a brilliant future! You agitate this thing, and get it into print, and you will be socially undone. You know they will not resign the child without a struggle, and when such things get into court, the whole world knows it. But if you quietly go away, for a few months, inasmuch as your wife left you, you can, by paying a large sum to some divorce specialist, procure your freedom in such a quiet manner that there will be no blazing headlines in the society papers, as appeared about a certain 'misalliance' some eight years ago."

Ada's repeated reference to those "headlines" always silenced Ralph. It simply sickened him to think of that sight. And being a coward at heart, as are most unconverted persons, he would now to save his name from public stigma, forego his rights as a father. Lela had sat silent so far, but she now said with tears in her eyes:—

"O Ralph, is *this* to be the end? Can you thus turn from Irma and your child? Shame on you! I cry, Shame on you! How I do wish I had been more tender and loving to Irma. You every one know that she is right as to her faith and everything else. She is a lady born. None of us have ever appreciated her, or treated her right, and now she is gone, taking our baby with her."

Lela began to sob. Ralph looked uneasy, but Ada came to the rescue by saying:—

"You please keep quiet, Lela. Do you not realize that the social future of the Hughs son and heir is at stake? There is nothing which should not be put under-



foot now. We have an opportunity to retrieve the past, in a measure. Do not let us shrink from our duty."

Lela looked at her sister, and said, "Ada, are you a human being? or are you one of those beautiful incarnate *fiends* we read about? The latter, I think. I wish I had been brave enough to espouse Irma's cause, and to walk in the light she has so faithfully let shine in this family for the last eight years; alas! I fear my day of grace is passed! I saw the light, and was not brave enough to step out. And of all things, Ralph, *do* leave her in peace with that child. If you do not intend to seek a reconciliation, and treat your wife as you should, do leave her child alone. I do believe the visible wrath of God would descend upon you did you try to take Maggie from her mother."

Ada's face paled before Lela's impassioned manner, and she said, "Yes, I would let the child alone, for the present at least. I think the law requires a choice between the parents when a child is old enough to decide. That being the case, you could only keep Maggie for a few years at best. And she would grieve herself to death were she separated from her mother. I should wash my hands of the pair, and at once take passage for Europe."

Did Satan ever have such an advocate, or another such an ally, as Ada was now proving? Surely, he who gathereth not with Jesus scattereth abroad; and it was thus that the prayer of the Dean family, that they might be permitted to retain their treasure, was about to be answered. And so the Lord can work, and none can hinder; and he even makes the wrath of man to praise Him.



## CHAPTER XLI.

MRS. DEAN received from on high new physical strength to meet the demand made upon her now. It would be useless to try to depict the grief in this home. Each one tried to appear cheerful and to be brave. First, for Jesus' sake, then for the sake of each other, and for the child for whom each was making such a sacrifice. Mr. Dean controlled his indignation, and took no hasty step, for the godly counsel of his gentle wife held all evil in check. Irma tried to busy herself with the duties, which were once a pleasure, but alas! all pleasure was now gone. She grew nervous, and started at each sound of the door bell. Not one word had she heard from Ralph since she quitted his roof, and now several days had elapsed. She did not know what step he would take, but suspense was soon at an end; for upon opening the morning paper some ten days after she left the Hughs place, this paragraph met her eyes:—

“Quite a pleasure party sailed for Europe this week. Among the number we notice Ralph, son of Hughs, the banker, who has suddenly been called to the Old World in behalf of his father's banking interest in that part of the globe. He took advantage of the outgoing party, and will thereby avoid a lonely voyage.”

So *that* was the result for the present at least. Not one word of farewell. Not one sign of any interest in wife or child. And now what was she to do?—Live for the child, of course, if God spared to her the little creature. Of that she felt doubtful; for the child was anything but robust.



Now the true worth of Aunt Prudence became manifest. She left her home, and came to comfort and help the afflicted ones. She said the words "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," rang in her ears as a refrain. Miss Mildred B. came, too, and long and earnestly did she talk and pray with her dear friend, "little Irma Dean," as she ever spoke of Irma.

Miss Mildred was soon to be married to the young man of whom four years before she had told Mrs. Dean. Both had finished their studies, going through college, and taking the medical missionary course, and would now soon become one in name, as well as interest, and sail for foreign lands, there to "do or die" for the Lord of Hosts. Irma's mind could but revert to her once bright dreams of usefulness. How sad the reality! How deplorable her present condition!

Maggie would sometimes stand quietly by her mother's side for some moments, and then timidly say:—

"Mama, I want to see my papa, don't you? I wonder why he does not come to us, and take us home. He will soon, will he not, mamma?"

Irma would almost faint with the pain that gnawed at her vitals when her innocent little one would stand with those pleading eyes turned upon her mother's face, and make these inquiries. The mother would give a truthful, but not a satisfactory answer to her child, and it was always Aunt Prudence who came to the rescue by diverting Maggie's attention to something else. So the dreary days slipped by.

One day the servant brought up the message that a lady was in the parlor to see Mrs. Hughs. The girl said the visitor gave no name, was heavily veiled, and in-



sisted upon seeing Mrs. Hughs at once, saying she was "a friend." Irma went down immediately, and in a moment was sobbing in Lela's arms. Lela said:—

"I could not bear it; I had to seek you out. O Irma, I love you, why did this have to come about? What will we all do? Ada never ceased to importune until she set Ralph half crazy, and he left for Europe, and now we do not even know of his whereabouts."

Irma calmly and quietly explained to Lela her position, and ended by saying, "It was like tearing heart cords asunder to take the step I took. But I was compelled to decide for my child. It did not seem possible that my husband would leave her in my hands; but I made the effort to save her, leaving the consequences in God's hands. You know the result, so far. Of course, I put any thought of self or happiness entirely behind me when I took a step which is condemned by God and man. But I tried to 'choose the lesser evil.'"

Lela answered, "I do not blame you. It was a burning shame the way Ada acted with Maggie. You did not know it, as bad as it was. I often pleaded with Ralph to take you both and go away; but he seemed to have degenerated into a base coward, and his fear of the jeers of heartless people, called 'society,' held him back. But you have to be thankful, for that same spirit of cowardice, for it is owing to that alone that Maggie is with you now."

Irma said, "No, dear, it is owing to the power of prayer alone that my child is still cradled in a mother's arms."

Lela sat quietly weeping, and holding Irma's hand in a close clasp. At last, she said:—



"I must see our little pet. You know I love her fondly."

Irma went out and returned with the child, who, with a glad cry, sprang into Lela's open arms. After some moments, Lela said:—

"Irma, right is right. You must permit me to pack and send your belongings to you, dear, please do."

She saw the blood leap into Irma's face, and knew she was about to refuse, so the girl went, and kneeled down by Irma, gently encircling her with two loving arms, and said:—

"Not if you love Lela will you refuse her just this little bit of pleasure, and one opportunity of executing justice and judgment!"

Irma stooped, and kissing the girl, answered, "If you really wish this, be it as you desire."

Lela replied, "I do wish it, and shall at once, all alone, pack and arrange your things, and send them over by an express wagon, that no one be any the wiser at home."

As Lela arose to go, Irma said, "Oh, my sister, once more, I beg of you to 'flee the wrath to come.' Please seek your Saviour while He may be found. 'Call upon Him while He is near.' Do not go on with your defenseless head exposed to the pitiless storm of these last days. Come home to Jesus."

Lela turned, and looked sorrowfully into Irma's earnest eyes, and said, "I am too weak to take the step. I know you are right. I have been convinced for some time. Would that I 'dared to be a Daniel,' as I have so often heard you say. I want to say just here that my father loves you too, and regrets you and Maggie, and



he is so vexed with Ralph that I think it possible that Ralph will yet be disappointed in his great expectations financially. That is why my mother and Ada are so anxious for Ralph to yet wed Miss Golden, she is a multi-millionaire in her own right."

Irma reeled as if she had indeed received a blow. Lela continued:—

"I know it seems heartless to even mention such a thing; but I thought it best that you be in a measure prepared for the worst."

Irma answered, "I thank you, dear, the worst has come for me. My heart is broken, and my life blighted. Yet my Heavenly Father will not refuse a broken and a contrite heart, so I know he will bind up mine. Pour in the oil and the balm of Gilead, and let me yet work for him. That is the one thought that holds me back from absolute despair and desperation."

"You are a modern martyr," said Lela.

Irma answered, "Anything else; I am only a weak, sinful woman, but his strength is made perfect in my weakness."

Lela then approached, and took Irma in her arms in a tender, farewell embrace, and left the room, saying:—

"Sister, pray for me, even yet do not turn away from me as from one unclean."

Irma replied, "While I live, I shall pray for you, dear, and so will our little Maggie."

Thus they parted.



## CHAPTER XLII.

As spring approached, Irma could but notice that her mother was failing rapidly. She besought her father to take some decided measures for her mother's restoration to health. "Oh, let's do *something!*" she said. But the gentle mother said, "No, my daughter; some of us are to 'sleep,' you know. I think our Father is to be so merciful to me that I shall be one of those fortunate ones. I am weary with the heat of the fray, and will gladly rest until the resurrection morn."

And it came to pass that she *did* fall asleep. There did not seem to be any acute disease, or any pain; just a weariness, a fading away, a "falling asleep" indeed. The gentle invalid seemed better, and had even gone out the Sabbath previous. It was her first appearance at church for months; but as the weather was balmy, she desired very much to go, and no one felt like disappointing her. The exertion proved too much, and she was soon confined to her room again, and finally to her bed. Yet the family continued to "hope against hope," and to try to cheer each other into believing that she would soon be better again.

The end was sudden, and a shock at last; for Irma could not believe her own senses when Aunt Prudence insisted that in a few moments the patient sufferer would be at rest, and told Irma to bring Maggie to receive a blessing from those gentle, loving hands. Irma was as one dazed. Nor did she awaken until she saw Aunt Prudence lean over and actually place her fingers on those precious, love-lit eyes to close them forever.



Who but a daughter that has stood just where Irma then stood can know the pain of that daughter's heart? She fell upon her knees by her mother's side crying, "Mother! oh, my mother! Is it possible that I have no mother now? Mama! mama! My disregard of your loving advice in my girlhood days; my sad life, my sadder home-coming, my condition and position, have brought this about. I know that our Father is merciful, and the very best he can do for us now is to just let my precious mama rest. Rest, rest, sweet indeed will be your rest, dear one. But what of your poor, sinful, heart-broken child? How often I shall awaken at night, with a feeling of almost wild despair, to think that I have no mother now! No mother! Is it possible? No mother! And papa has lost his loving companion! And Maggie's best friend is gone — Aunt Prudence's and Mildred's too! What will our poor do? But saddest of all, what shall *I* do?"

It really seemed that Irma must sink beneath her weight of woe. But underneath are the everlasting arms, and her trust in him who "doeth all things well," was firm; so she arose to take up again the burden of life. Yes, the burden; for she had never yet learned to give up her woe into the hands of the great Burden Bearer. She did not know how to assume his easy yoke, nor find his light burden. Hers was an intense nature, and her sufferings were in accordance with it. Just what she had suffered because of her affection and her honest pride, both of which had been so outraged, no tongue can express nor pen describe.

No one, except her immediate family, and Mildred B. —, had even heard one word escape her lips as to her



domestic unhappiness, and she had never yet been known to introduce the subject, even with them. It was to her mother alone, that she ever unbosomed herself in these late years of anguish; and that mother was now lying low, and the daughter must again tread the winepress alone.

As soon as Irma could collect herself, she decided to enter the training school for nurses. It was late to enter; but she determined to take up this work now, and to allow nothing to deter her. Mildred encouraged her, as did both Aunt Prudence and Mr. Dean. Mildred was soon to be married, and Irma dreaded to be separated from this one staunch friend.

Six or eight months had passed since Irma returned to her father's home, and, as yet, she had never heard one word from Ralph Hughs. But a lawyer had called one day to learn what her grounds for defense would be in case of suit for divorce. She answered, "There will be no defense — no effort upon my part at all." The man bowed himself out, and she had heard no more from him. But she was in a state of unrest, of course. Several times there had come handsome presents to Maggie, but Irma knew that Lela sent them.

During the winter, which set in early that year, Irma often procured a copy of a certain society paper, and, in the seclusion of her own room, eagerly scanned its pages. She could not resist the impulse to try to learn something of the Hughs family. Yet she instinctively felt that when that "something" was learned, it would be most terrible for her; nor was she disappointed in this.

One bleak, dreary afternoon she hurried in, paper in hand, and at once sought the warmth and privacy of her



own room. Drawing a chair to the grate, she seated herself and opened her paper. Turning at once to the society news, she read:—

“We copy the following from foreign papers:—

“HUGHS — GOLDEN.”

“Americans in this city are enjoying a series of entertainments given in honor of Ralph Hughs, an American gold-bug, and his wife, *nee* Golden, said to be a multi-millionaire in her own right. They are quite popular here. The bridal party includes the mother and two brilliant sisters of the groom. A romance adds zest to the whole thing. It seems that the high contracting parties were intended for each other in the heyday of early youth; but as true love never runs smooth, so it proved in this case. There is just enough spice about it to please the public palate. There seems to be another Mrs. Hughs somewhere; but it is making little difference here. Mrs. Golden-Hughs must have considered her prize worth the having, as, in order to please her lord and master, she accompanied his family over here, and the marriage was celebrated in the American circles in Paris. It is understood that after the season is over, the entire party will go into Lenten retirement in some Swiss village. They have succeeded in creating a sensation, which is the dearest desire of the average moneyed American heart.”

Who would wish to witness Irma's agony? She glanced around the room, and like a panorama there arose before her mind's eye that *other* bridal scene, when *she* stood, all arrayed in shimmering white, alone with her precious mother, just in front of that identical mirror, and arising from her bended knees went forth to become the bride of this same Ralph Hughs, who had just succeeded in “creating a sensation” in Europe by his second effort in that direction.



As soon as she was composed enough to think, one of the first things her mind dwelt upon was Ada's delight over what *she* had at last succeeded in bringing about. Irma knew that Ada had now reached the very pinnacle of earthly happiness, and had absolutely nothing left to wish for, unless it was to see Irma's misery; and she could well imagine that. But Irma conquered there all alone; and when she went down to the family, there was a peculiar look of triumph upon her face, that at once attracted attention. She unwaveringly approached her father, and placed the paper in his hands.

It was fearful to see the anger depicted in Mr. Dean's face as he read. He was so furious that he began to breathe out threats of vengeance. But Irma seemed to be her mother herself, as she laid her gentle hand upon her father's arm, and said, "Vengeance is *mine*; *I will repay*, saith the Lord.'"

And who can doubt that He will? Who would exchange places with Ralph Hughs, or with the woman whom he now calls by the sacred name of "wife"? Who would not rather stand where Irma Dean Hughs stands? She can at least have an entrance into the earth made new; and there all tears will be wiped away, and "we shall wonder that we ever grieved."



## CHAPTER XLIII.

AUNT PRUDENCE was blinded by tears as she unrobed little Maggie, and put her to sleep that night. We will leave any true mother to imagine Irma's feelings as she stood, later, looking down upon that sweet little face with its grieved lip. Grieved that mama had not that one night been strong enough to put her baby to sleep, but had been compelled to delegate that sacred duty this one time.

In a few days Mildred B——'s wedding day would dawn. Irma was almost desperate at the thought of her friend's leaving her, and the family feared the consequences. At last Irma said:—

“Mildred, could you not, after you are married, get your husband to intercede for me with the Foreign Missionary Board, and entreat them to accept me; and let me go with you, and continue to train under you? You know I have had so much practical experience. Please do this for me. I would be self-sustaining, and could put quite a sum of money into the work.”

Mildred promised.

Now the time was come for more marriage vows to be spoken. If ever there was a marriage sanctioned in heaven, it must have been this one. A more beautiful sight could not easily be imagined than this quiet church wedding, where everyone seemed to think that this couple was fulfilling God's appointed ways, in thus becoming united in the holy bonds of wedlock. More than eight long years they had loved, labored, and studied; they had



left nothing undone to bring themselves to a standard of perfection. And now it seemed that their marriage was entirely for the purpose of promoting the good of the cause of Christ, and to glorify God. There seemed to be not one iota of self left. Oh, for more of such unions in our ranks! Then our people will be able to obey the injunction: "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

As Irma heard her friend speak the solemn words which made her a wife, it was with an aching heart that the forgotten wife thought of her own marriage vows. It is true that she had been compelled to break them in the letter, but God knew how sacredly she had kept them in the spirit.

After the ceremony, Irma's two friends, now one in name and interest, went home with Mr. Dean by special invitation. After a simple repast, which all enjoyed, Mr. Dean discussed seriously with the intended missionaries, the idea of Irma's going out with them. All thought it would save her, but what of that delicate, precious child for whom she, the mother, had laid herself upon the rack ever since it was born to her? Everyone knew it would be a great risk to take the little girl to the low, dank, malarious climate for which this party would be bound. Irma's heart grew sick with apprehensions at the mere thought of what the consequences to the child would in all probability be. She thought of how she had wept over articles in the missionary magazines, telling where parents had been compelled alone to bury their little ones. It seemed to her that the death of her child would indeed be the crowning blow. But as often as she hesitated came



that scripture: "He that loveth father or mother," etc., or "children," she would say over and over again. At last, she stood up in this group (for the council had developed into a private social meeting, interspersed with appropriate prayers and songs), and said:—

"'Here am I, send me,' and even my little Maggie. Should I have to stand by another open grave, my Saviour has stood there before me. I will not, I dare not draw back."

The arrangement with the board was perfected, and Irma was to do at last that which she had planned to do at first, to go as a missionary to foreign lands.

We will pass over the hasty preparation, the leave-taking of sacred spots, the visit to her mother's grave, the last evening at home, the last prayer around the family altar, where every eye was streaming, and where still stood the old armchair. Irma knelt by this chair upon this last season of worship in her old home. It seemed to Mr. Dean that his home would indeed be left unto him desolate, when he should have kissed his daughter and her child good-by! But he was developing into such a gentle Christian that he could truthfully say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;" and he knew the way to hasten that coming was to help spread the message; and here was the opportunity of his life, in which he could give both his household idols and his means to help spread the glad tidings of "Jesus and his love." And nobly did he "give" at this time. Yes, he gave his earthly all, and rich will be his reward in the earth made new.

As our party was to sail at daylight, they went on the ship early in the afternoon of the day before. Mr.



Dean and Aunt Prudence went down to the water with them, as did many other friends. As the missionaries started on the ship, those present began to sing, "Jesus, I my cross have taken."

There were few dry eyes. It was most affecting to see little Maggie clinging to Mr. Dean and Aunt Prudence, and it was an effort to loosen her clasp.

At last it was all over; the last kiss had been given, the last "God bless you" had been spoken, and Aunt Prudence and Mr. Dean had turned away. Irma and Mildred sought their berths, each trying to sing that —

"Duty makes me understand,  
That we must take the parting hand,  
But in that bright and happy land,  
We'll take no more the parting hand."

Thus they leave all that makes home so sweet and sacred, and go forth at the word of their Captain's command, to "do duty" until "honestly discharged," or until the Saviour comes.

We who remain at home do not love and pray as we should, nor do we give as God wishes us to. Let us think more of these things; for there are many real flesh-and-blood Irmas and Mildreds, and even little Maggies, also, who have gone out from us. Oh, yes, we have gone with them to the water's edge; have taken part in the last prayer, and followed them with the refrain of a missionary song; and then have quietly gone home to pursue the even tenor of our way, and left them to their work beneath a burning southern sky, or to suffer with cold in some frigid zone where the mercury is lost below zero; and yet we flatter ourselves that, as a people, we have the missionary spirit.



## CHAPTER XLIV.

SOME months later we find our missionaries toiling beneath a tropical sun, doing all in their power to cheer the few native Christians, and trying to reach the heathen. Mildred and her husband are happy. That fact is patent to all. Equally yoked, they go forth hand in hand to do their Father's work. Their beautiful home life and domestic happiness are an inspiration to all with whom they come in contact. No one could go to their humble abode, and see the sweet spirit of contentment and peace which was breathed forth, and doubt that their lives were "ordered of the Lord" in all things. And this was true of them. Unreservedly they were given up to be used of the Lord. Fully consecrated, was it any wonder that their lives were beautiful to behold, or that their very souls seemed to be in the words, as they sang, "Wholly thine, O Lord, just now"?

Such can be true of any who will do as did these young people. *Fit* themselves to be husbands and wives; fit themselves to serve the Lord in every sphere of life, and *then* go forth to obey the injunction, "Arise, shine: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

And what of Irma, and little Maggie? Irma's means enabled her to live in much more comfort than did her friends, though she lavished upon them all they would accept. But they urged her to put into the message what she would give them for personal use; and she did give freely. None were turned away empty. It was



her purse which supplied the means for every private enterprise in the mission, and also for much co-operative work in the district. She was never tired of giving: it seemed her one solace. And her father kept her supplied with all necessary funds. Thus she had one rare, sweet pleasure,—that of giving: giving without stint or measure; giving without having to account to anyone for anything given; giving to the sick, the afflicted, the humble, the poor, and to the rich, if need be. To some natures this privilege reaches almost the sum total of human happiness; and Irma had developed one of those rare natures.

And the same principle was being developed in little Maggie. Maggie was growing up a lovely child—patient under every privation, noble, generous, truthful, just. Every characteristic she possessed seemed to be of the Lord's own choosing. The child was a revelation to the natives. They looked upon her as something pure, lovely, perfect; something that they could not understand, but something to be held in almost sacred awe. The little thing never tired of waiting upon the sick among them. The black faces did not deter her; and many were the cups of cold water pressed to their fever-parched lips; and many a black brow was laved by those baby hands.

Irma was so careful of her child that life was a burden. The mother saw how very frail the little one was becoming, and often the child spoke of pain in her head. But this gave no great cause for alarm, and Irma hoped that after the extreme heat was over, "the angel of the home," as Maggie was called, would grow stronger. It seemed to Irma, that the child was among



them, but not of them. The whole mission family began to fear the effect of the climate upon the little one. There had been some thought of sending her home; but she had almost fainted at the first intimation of such a thing. The others had even insisted that Irma leave, and take her child to "the States." The mother said, "What is that about putting one's hand to the plow and looking back? No, I can not afford it." But she did beg, beseech, and importune God for the child's life. Many times the mother would arise at midnight and touch the child, to see if she were breathing; and upon finding that the little one responded to her touch, she would prostrate herself face downward upon the very earth, to thank the Heavenly Father that the child yet lived.

One Sabbath day the child went to a hut to see one of the native women, and as she stayed longer than usual, Irma went to see if all was right. What a sight met her eyes! There was Maggie, with her little white dress looped back, down on her knees trying to cook some cakes of bread for the woman's dinner. She proved to be very sick, and no one knew it until Maggie went over. When the little angel of mercy had a small portion cooked, she would take it to the sick woman, who, to please her small friend, would try to eat it. Irma could think of but one thing—"And a little child shall lead them."

Some months passed, bringing Maggie's birthday. She was now eight years old. A package of some size and weight reached Irma about this time, and upon opening it she found some handsome presents for Maggie. Irma knew at once that Lela had made an



effort, found their address, and sent these things, hoping that they would reach the child for her birthday. Irma had secured a beautiful little Bible as a birthday offering for her little girl. When the day came, the mother placed the package containing Lela's offering and the Bible together, and gave them into Maggie's hand, telling her that "Aunt Lela sent those beautiful things." The child laid all "those beautiful things" carefully aside at her left hand, and taking the Bible in her right hand, said, "These are pretty; I appreciate them, and thank Aunt Lela for them; but give me *this*," holding the Bible up to view, "and you may have all of those."

One day an old woman was discovered lying under a tree near a hut, and apparently suffering. Our missionaries went over to investigate the matter, and found the poor old creature helpless, blind, demented, and covered with loathsome sores. She had been deserted by her own kindred, and left there to die. The missionaries did what they could to relieve her, but could not induce even her own son to permit her to return to him. So great was Maggie's compassion for her that she could not be induced to eat a meal without being first permitted to go and feed with a teaspoon this miserable, loathsome specimen of humanity. Irma would allow the child to go, but would follow closely behind her. The poor old creature knew the little one's step and voice, and sometimes, with a gleam of reason, would say, "There is that little angel."



## CHAPTER XLV.

ANOTHER year passed, and matters remained much the same with our missionary friends; but Irma saw that her child's life hung as it were by a thread. The little girl had grown rapidly, and was now past her ninth birthday. She was a comfort and a pleasure to her friends, and the solace of her mother's life.

Often when the day's duties were over, Irma found herself almost too weak to keep up for evening worship. Maggie would then say:—

“You lie down, mama, and just listen, and I will read. I will read the fourteenth chapter of John.”

This and the book of Revelation were the child's favorite portions of God's Word. She would then read, and lead in prayer, while her mother would lie with closed eyes and streaming tears, realizing that ere long this greatest treasure of her life would be gone, and that she would tread the solitary path alone indeed.

One day Maggie was playing with a favorite doll, one which had been given her long before by one of Irma's special friends. All at once she stopped playing, and said:—

“Mama, I want this doll buried in my arms. I do, indeed.”

The mother could not say one word, but she bowed her head in assent. As the heated season approached, the mission family saw that the child must succumb. Some days she would be up, while others she would pass, reclining on a couch made of bamboo. All showed her



little, loving attentions. The natives brought every little curio possible, to help their little pet to while away the moments. There was very little that could be done for the child. All seemed to see the shadow drawing nearer. If ever people prayed without ceasing, it was this people now,—not for the little one to be spared; but that Irma's faith fail not.

Irma often talked with her child of the beautiful home to be enjoyed in the new earth; and often they would dwell upon the picture in John 14: "In my Father's house are many mansions." Both took hold of the promises as never before.

Irma often said to Mildred, "My child has taught me how to live; she will also teach me how a Christian should die."

Maggie failed daily. No longer could she sit up, or read aloud for worship, or lead in prayer. She was just a mite of humanity, anxious to be released from her weary waiting. It was about three o'clock, Thursday afternoon, that the knell went forth, "Maggie is dying."

No one but a mother who has stood by the death-bed of a child of like nature, can enter into Irma's grief. Her friends feared that it would overpower her, but as long as her child needed any attention Irma was there to give it. At last little Maggie lay robed in spotless white, to sleep until the resurrection morn.

How many mothers will go back over a like experience? How many have stood thus beside their little ones, and grieved as if there were no comfort, even when in their native land, surrounded by husband, friends, and home comforts? What mother even then can bear the sight of the little white casket? What must this



blow have been for this fond heart, away in a heathen land, with only some half dozen of her own color around her, and with absolutely none of the comforts of modern civilization to soften the harsh outlines of death.

As the mission circle stood looking upon their little pet, someone said, "Let us pray." It was then that Irma voiced the first sentiment of rebellion that anyone had heard her express. She answered, "Pray? And for what? I have done nothing but pray since this child was born; prayed that God would spare her life to me. You see the result. If all the agony of my life had been rolled together, and burst at once over my defenseless head, it could not have equaled this. If you can prevail in prayer to the extent that I can be enabled to say, 'Thy will be done,' then pray." And, kneeling, that was the burden of their prayer. For hours Irma wept bitter, blinding tears. But upon going to her dead child, and finding that precious little body cold, when it was but so lately warm and loving, her tears seemed to congeal, and not another tear did she shed. She straightened up from over the little, silent form, and seemed to be turned to a marble woman. Dry-eyed, silent, seemingly unmoved, she looked as one dazed, and continued in that state. When they bore her baby from her sight to consign the body to mother-earth, she could not go to witness that sight; nor did she ever see the little mound. Others tended it with loving care, but not the mother.

Irma's friends feared for her reason. But they could not think that Satan would get the victory, so they continued to pray. They sent the news to the home churches as soon as possible, requesting all to pray for



them. They knew that if no tears came to this woman's relief, hers was a hopeless fate. But God is good! He loves His own, and is abundantly able to take care of them.

After Maggie was gone, Irma's friends had in kindness put out of sight all little dresses and shoes. Oh, what mother's heart does not ache over the thought of these things? They put away her toys, her bonnet, her little sunhat and even her precious little Bible, which had been clasped in her hands when she died, and from which someone had read by the side of her little dead body the fourteenth chapter of John. It was years before this mother could sit calmly by, and listen to the reading of that chapter.

The poor woman for whom Maggie had cooked the corn cakes on the Sabbath day, came and begged to be allowed to wash all soiled linen and clothing. When she returned with the articles, upon the very top of the basket lay one of Maggie's dainty little white dresses. When the woman came in, she began to show Irma spots upon it, motioning to make them understand that they were made by her tears; in fact the little garment had been sprinkled with her tears. At the pathetic sight of this poor heathen trying to make them understand what her grief had been over their great loss, what wonder that a mother's tears burst forth afresh. Irma wept sweet, refreshing tears, that lightened her heart, and saved her brain. Yes, the stress and strain was over, and her friends went apart to "thank God and take courage" that the victory had been won, and that this sweet, gentle, consecrated woman would be spared to work out her own salvation, even though with trembling.



My story is told. It is an offering to the Lord. There is but little fiction contained in it. It is fact, solid fact, all too sad, and all too true.

Some may think that it deals too freely with woman's tears and woman's woe. But I know whereof I speak, and venture to say that woman in general will bear me out in the assertion that the "half has not been told."

A parting glimpse at Irma, and we will leave her. It is the first anniversary of her child's death. The mother is standing with a picture in one hand and a little Bible in the other. As she looks off into space, in the direction where a certain little mound of clay may be found, she murmurs, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." And we say, Amen, and Amen!







Oct 14 1901



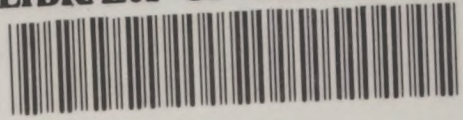
OCT 2 1901







**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**



00012724421